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LIBERTY IS A BIG WORD. Add American and you have a façade so imposing and opaque that one automobile magnate and three munitions manufacturers can hide behind it with scarcely a motive showing. The American Liberty League, "a non-partisan group," was founded last August to preserve constitutional rights, among others "the right to work, earn, save, and acquire property." At the December 20 performance of the munitions hearings—that hit of the Washington season in which the insurgent impresario from North Dakota is presenting the Three du Ponts in a little skit under Senate auspices—the cradle of the American Liberty League was revealed for the first time as being somewhere in Delaware. "You haven't much to do," wrote John J. Raskob last March to R. R. M. Carpenter, retired vice-president of E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, "and I know of no one that could better take the lead in trying to induce the du Pont and General Motors groups . . . to definitely organize to protect society from the suffering which it is bound to endure if we allow communistic elements to lead the people to believe that all business men are crooks and that no one should be allowed to get rich." The organization, he continued, should encourage people to work and to get rich; and he concluded by saying, "Pierre, as a citizen, has set us a fine example. . . ." Pierre as a Citizen was followed by a sketch of Pierre and His Brothers as Munitions Makers, in which Senator Nye produced this letter from Major Casey of the du Pont Company to its Paris agent:

> You must realize that our price schedule on rifle-powder sales to the United States government is 71 cents a pound. . . . The prices you have quoted figure, in the instance of sales to England, a gross selling price . . . of 54½ cents and in the instance of Belgium, of a price of 57.6 cents. . . . Since our sales to the United States total approximately 700,000 pounds of rifle powder annually, we cannot take the chance of this reduced figure being divulged.

At the same hearing it was disclosed that the du Pont Company made a net profit of $228,731,000 from 1915 to 1918 and paid salaries and bonuses of $225,015,000. Pierre, as Mr. Raskob said, has set us a fine example.

JAPAN'S ACTION in abrogating the Washington naval treaty marks the end of the first serious attempt at the international restriction of armaments. It is important to recall that the pact was concluded in conjunction with the Nine-Power Treaty, and that together the two agreements represented an effort to stabilize the status quo in the Pacific. Like all political documents, these pacts were the outcome of a compromise. The United States, which was at the time engaged in a huge naval building program, agreed to grant Japan a 5-3 ratio and to refrain from building fortifications in the Pacific, while Japan, in exchange, accepted in principle the territorial integrity of China and the Open Door policy. This agreement was broken, not by Japan's recent repudiation of the 5-3 ratio, but by its invasion of Manchuria in 1931. The subsequent fortification of its Pacific mandates in violation of the agreement with the League further destroyed the basis of the 1922 compromise. That the arrangement as a whole has proved a failure is evident. It has not restrained Japan from pursuing its imperialist course in Asia, nor has it prevented a race in naval armaments. The cause of the failure, however, would appear to lie in peculiar qualities of Japanese psychology and in the turbulent domestic situation in that country rather than in any inherent flaw in international agreements.

DESPITE PREMIER FLANDIN'S widely heralded recovery measures, it is evident that economic conditions in France are rapidly drifting from bad to worse. The recent closing of the Citroën automobile factory, one of the largest in Europe, because of acute financial difficulties is but a symptom of general economic deterioration. In the first week of December registered unemployment reached a record high of 385,000, and this figure is said to represent less than one-quarter of the actual number of jobless. Industrial production is falling, and bankruptcies are the highest of any period in the depression. Wholesale prices have declined 12 per cent in the past year without, however, bringing any ap-

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preciable reduction in France's abnormally high cost of living. In agriculture the situation remains grave, though the Flandin government has introduced measures somewhat akin to the Roosevelt AAA program in an effort to prevent further overproduction of wheat and grapes. Only one industry appears to be flourishing and that—the arms trade—must, according to Premier Flandin, be accelerated at all costs. Despite the furor for government economy, the Chamber of Deputies recently approved a supplementary appropriation of 800,000,000 francs for defense, the bulk of which is to go directly to the munition firms.

ANOTHER THREE DOZEN or so bills have just been passed by the Louisiana "legislature," with Senator Long cracking the whip. Through a state budget commission, which he will of course control, the Senator now has complete power over the 15,000 school teachers in the state. Moreover, Long, in accordance with his plan to turn Louisiana into a single province governed by him, has abolished, through his Senate Finance Committee, local self-government in East Baton Rouge and has announced his intention in the near future of proceeding in like manner with the city of Baton Rouge. He also forced through both houses a bill, which the lawmakers had formerly rejected, removing from office the mayor and two commissioners of Alexandria, a city of 23,000 persons (who had, to be sure, duly elected their city officials), and levied a general and sweeping manufacturers' tax on every commodity except ice, bread, and milk. The third special session of the Louisiana Legislature thereupon adjourned *sine die* without having gone contrary to the wishes of Senator Long one single time. In the general chorus of meek acquiescence to the whims of King Huey there was one lone dissenting voice. A hero named G. W. Lester—may his fame be writ in enduring bronze!—rose and denounced his fellow-legislators as "putty-faced stooges" for accepting the Long program without a protest. When you count in the two journalism students at Louisiana State University, and Biff Jones, coach of the university football team, that makes at least four men in the state who are not afraid of the Louisiana Hitler.

FOR ABOUT TWELVE HOURS on December 19 there was civil war in Shelbyville, Tennessee, when a mob attempted to take a Negro prisoner, accused of the rape of a fourteen-year-old white girl, from the courthouse and was repulsed by the National Guard. Three of the mob were killed and a number seriously injured in the fracas; and when the militia had temporarily retreated after conveying the Negro to Nashville, the attacking party formed again and burned the courthouse to the ground. Out of this desperate and bloody story stand the important facts that the law was upheld, and that the Governor, Hill McAlister, when advised that violence was imminent and a lynching would be attempted, was courageous enough to order out the troops to protect the prisoner and the court. There are instances recorded of lynching mobs which were repulsed by a determined sheriff with a pistol; that the Shelbyville rioters could be conquered only by tear gas and machine-gun bullets is perhaps to be accounted for by the increasingly bitter economic competition between Southern whites and Negroes for the few jobs that exist. Race prejudice has been heightened by unemployment and starvation, as it undoubtedly was in the recent torture and lynching of Claude Neal in Florida. All possible credit is due to Governor McAlister for preventing a repetition of that nightmare; but both the Marianna and the Shelbyville episodes should result in enormous pressure on Congress for the enactment early in the coming session of a federal anti-lynching law.

WHEN GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR brought suit for libel against the Washington *Times* Company, as publishers of the Washington *Herald,* and against Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, co-conductors of the Washington Merry-Go-Round, a column in that newspaper (and some 250 others), the case was front-page news all around the country. The sum involved was an impressive one for even a Chief of Staff to demand—$1,750,000. The alleged libel lay in several statements by the columnists intimating that the General had pulled political wires to insure his reappointment and had otherwise conducted himself in ways unbecoming a high-ranking army officer. The suit was news for other reasons. In "City Editor," Stanley Walker of the New York *Herald Tribune* pointed to its importance as a test to determine the freedom of newspapers to comment on public officials. It was even rumored that men high in the ranks of the government were strongly, though not openly, backing the prosecution. Now the General has withdrawn his suit. The *Editor and Publisher* duly noted the fact and quoted a statement from Messrs. Pearson and Allen in which they said: "No money was paid by us to General MacArthur. . . . No apologies or retractions were given or asked for. Our position in the case is the same as it was when the General first filed suit, namely, that we stood ready to prove the truth of all that we had published." They also pointed out that "the abandonment of the suit emphasizes more clearly than ever the wide latitude which, under a free press, must be allowed for criticism of public officials." But in spite of this quite obvious moral, the General's retirement was not mentioned in the New York *Times* and was given little more than an inch in the *Herald Tribune.*

S. KLEIN, owner of the famous dress cafeteria on Union Square, New York, is having labor trouble. Specifically he is charged by the regional labor board with discharging sixty-four employees in November for union activity. The case was referred to Washington because the regional board has been unable to make a settlement, and Mr. Klein went personally to Washington to appear before the National Labor Relations Board. According to testimony before the regional board, Mr. Klein went to great lengths to keep "my kids," as he calls his employees, from self-organization: he intimidated employees who cast a friendly eye at the union and established an espionage system. The store has been picketed by the dismissed employees since the trouble began; their ranks have been kept more than full by the labor sympathizers to whom Union Square is unofficial headquarters; and a crisis occurred on December 18 when pickets and police met in a good old-fashioned Union Square "clash," in which fourteen pickets were arrested. Next to his low prices Mr. Klein is most noted for his elaborate precautions for preventing his customers from stealing clothes. His feeling toward labor unions and customers who steal seems to be the same. It might be stated simply as "God help those who help themselves."

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The Nation's Honor Roll for 1934

FOR the seventh time *The Nation* offers a list of Americans who have distinguished themselves in various fields during the past year. Some of these persons have accomplished important and enduring work; others have merely shown personal courage and commendable adherence to high principles in particular situations. All of them are worthy of the appreciation of their fellow-citizens.

LLOYD K. GARRISON, for his excellent work as head of the National Labor Relations Board. Under his chairmanship the board faced squarely the basic issue of union recognition and defined it in a series of unequivocal decisions (most of them unhappily not yet enforced).

FRANCIS BIDDLE, who showed himself to be a worthy successor to Lloyd Garrison as chairman of the National Labor Relations Board when he and his colleagues decided the Jennings case on its merits and refused to back down before the concerted attack of the entire American press.

The EDITORIAL STAFF of *Fortune,* for their articles on the munitions industry, which stimulated the important Senatorial investigation of the subject.

DOROTHY DETZER, executive secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, for persuading, almost single-handed, the progressive Senate leaders to demand an inquiry into the arms trade, and for her many realistic activities in the interest of peace.

GERALD P. NYE, Senator from North Dakota, for his courage in demanding and his skill in conducting the investigation of the munitions industry.

MARY VAN KLEECK, for her brilliant analysis of the causes of social insecurity before the National Conference of Social Work, and for initiating one of the first practical attempts to remove this insecurity through social planning.

FERDINAND PECORA, for his skill in marshaling and presenting before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency evidence proving the illegal and socially destructive operations of our financial high-binders.

CHARLOTTE CARR, Secretary of Labor and Industry of the State of Pennsylvania, and CORNELIA BRYCE PINCHOT, for unflagging support of labor's fight for the benefits and rights promised by the New Deal.

UPTON SINCLAIR, who not only enlivened an otherwise dull election by his spectacular campaign for the governorship of California, but in so doing revealed the unscrupulous nature of the economic group at present controlling that state's destinies.

ROBERT M. AND PHILIP LA FOLLETTE, for their persistence and skill in establishing the new Progressive Party in Wisconsin and carrying it to victory a few months after its organization.

GEORGE W. NORRIS, Senator from Nebraska, for winning the people of his state to support an extraordinary experiment, the abolition of their bi-cameral legislature and the substitution of a single house of not more than twenty-five members.

HEYWOOD BROUN, whose role as president and chief defender of a trade union for newspaper reporters is probably the most ingratiating and important of his long career.

JAMES BRYANT CONANT, president of Harvard University, for his forthright letter refusing the scholarship offered to Harvard by Ernst Hanfstängl, Hitler's right-hand man.

JOHN L. SPIVAK, for doing, in the *New Masses,* a lively and convincing job of muckraking, in nine articles revealing the extent and character of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda in the United States.

JESSE H. CUTRER, student of Louisiana State University, who resigned his editorship of the campus newspaper, and, with DAVID R. MCGUIRE, was distinguished by being dismissed from the university for daring to criticize Louisiana's little autocrat, Huey Long.

JOHN WECHSLER, editor of the Columbia *Spectator,* for his able and courageous journalistic attack on all forms of reaction at the university.

CONSTANCE ROURKE, author of "Davy Crockett," who continues to apply great imaginative gifts and her talent for creative research to the important but little-heralded task of incorporating American backgrounds into American consciousness.

LOUIS ADAMIC, for "The Native's Return," which happily combines the best features of literature and propaganda.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY, for "Wine from These Grapes," in which is demonstrated her capacity to sustain and develop her lyric inspiration.

PEGGY BACON, for "Off with Their Heads!" a volume of caricatures each accompanied by a brief word picture as witty and incisive as the drawings themselves.

THE GROUP THEATER, for its consistent and successful effort to take seriously all the arts of the theater, and, specifically, for its current production, "Gold Eagle Guy."

THE THEATER UNION, for steady progress in creating a "revolutionary theater" in which artistic integrity is not disregarded, and, specifically, for its production of "Stevedore" and "Sailors of Cattaro."

HAROLD C. UREY, of Columbia University, for the discovery of "heavy water"—an achievement which not only is of great interest to pure scientists but seems to open up a new field of investigation likely to produce important practical results in medicine.

G. V. MCCAULEY and J. C. HOSTETTER of the Corning Glass Works, whose skill and patience were largely responsible for the successful casting of a 200-inch mirror—the most difficult single feat in the construction of a new telescope which will put into the hands of astronomers an instrument far superior in penetrating power to any now in existence.

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A Message to Congress
(Which the President Might Read to It)

TO THE CONGRESS: I come before you at the opening of the Seventy-fourth Congress deeply imbued with the profound responsibility placed upon me and the majority party by the result of the last election. It went far beyond any personal or party tribute; it was a vote of confidence, I believe, less in men than in the measures the Administration has advocated for the purpose of restoring prosperity and of giving relief to the millions of our fellow-citizens and their families who are still without the means of support by their own labor. I should be less than human, however, if I were not moved to the depths of my being by my share in this unprecedented popular approval of what we have tried to do and have done. For my own part, may I take this opportunity to say most solemnly that I accept it as a mandate to proceed with our double task, first, of assuring a return to normal conditions, and, second, of modernizing our political and economic life, with complete social justice as our beacon-light?

That the problems before us are so vital and far-reaching as inevitably to make this session of Congress one of historic importance must be as clear to you as to me. Some of the questions to be settled will profoundly affect the national development for years to come. They cannot be answered in a short time, nor should they be decided with undue haste. The decreased minority in Congress makes it incumbent upon the majority to proceed with circumspection and care. Primarily, the Congress must decide the fundamental issue of the relations of labor and industry. This brings up at once the question of the permanence of any or some of the features of the National Industrial Recovery Act, which, as you are aware, expires by your limitation on June 16 next. To me, labor's retention of the right to collective bargaining and the duty of capital to deal with representatives of labor's own choosing remain the fundamental points in the reorganization of our economic life. I believe that labor should have equal weight with capital, and I am determined to bring to book those corporations which, after having solemnly signed their names to the codes for their businesses, are refusing to honor their signatures by obeying the law, and are seeking to defy the government itself. There is no more important duty before the Executive than to make it clear to the entire country that the government of the United States cannot be defied successfully by any individual, any corporation, or any group. The issue of how far government supervision over industry shall go is squarely before you. I believe that it must be sufficient to guarantee justice for labor, and the blocking of any further drift toward an economic oligarchy or toward monopoly.

The next most important field for your consideration is that of social security. In my message to you of June 8 I notified you of my plan to ask for unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. Specific bills covering these subjects accompany this message. I lay them before you as a basis for your consideration. The beginning of complete social security for the American citizen must no longer be postponed. It is for you to decide finally the details of unemployment insurance—how much industry shall be taxed for its support, who shall administer it. It is also imperative that you go a step farther and draft adequate legislation for insurance for the sick and the aged. In my message of June 8 I asked for authority for the modernization of existing homes and the building of new homes. The measures voted by your honorable body have made possible great advances. As I am not satisfied with our progress in this field, I hereby promise you that every effort will be made to double the speed of construction with the definite goal of a decent home for every American and the elimination of all slums. A British Minister has lately declared that there will not be a slum left in England after five years. Shall we lag behind Great Britain in achieving this great end? Again, it would in my judgment be a profound error to fail to embody in our permanent legislation minimum wages, shorter working hours, elimination of the sweatshop and, above all, of child labor. It is my earnest hope that the several states will ratify without delay the child-labor amendment to the Constitution and thereby bring us up to an equality in this matter with other countries. American childhood must be kept out of mine, factory, and field; it must not be exploited for private gain.

There is still another and a specific issue of profound import to which I invite your attention. The passage of the Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill is an immediate duty. It cannot have escaped your attention that our national honor has been foully besmirched by the recent lynching of Claude Neal, a Negro, near Greenwood, Florida. This prisoner was in the law's hands; his guilt was certain and confessed. The mob which took him from the jail advertised its purpose and accomplished it with a sadistic fury, an obscene barbarity, which make the printing of all the details an impossibility. Shocking as was the murder of the prisoner's victim, the fiendish conduct of the mob makes it impossible for Americans to point the finger of scorn at lawlessness anywhere in the world. It stains our flag, as it tarnishes our honor. I cannot guarantee that the Costigan-Wagner bill will stamp out mob murder, but I do know that it will give to the United States government some of the powers it needs to check this evil, which in its importance overshadows the government's war against gangsters, bootleggers, and the other organized elements among our criminals. The killing of four citizens at Shelbyville, Tennessee, last month by troops, in order to prevent the lynching of an American citizen accused of crime, is still further proof of the menace of this lawlessness to our national life.

Our goal is plain. It is the creation of a more ideal economic order. There shall be in the United States special privilege for none, economic equality for all, with the motive of private profit subordinated to the general welfare. That the road lies open, the field ready for cultivation, is obvious. The spirit of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which I have promised shall rise in every state, is the best pledge of that.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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Confusion in Germany

SINCE early December it has been apparent that the heavy industries and the Reichswehr are preparing for a new advance against the National Socialist regime. General von Fritsch, chief of the Reichswehr, presented a memorandum to the Chancellor which has been compared to Papen's speech of June 19. The Reichswehr insists that the semi-military party organizations, the SA and the SS, be still further shorn of power and importance. In line with these protests, there are rumors of Blomberg's impending retirement and the appointment of Göring as Minister of Defense in his place. Göring is looked upon as the man to clean up the SA; and because of his close connections with the Junkers and the big industrialists he can be relied on to do the bidding of those elements. But Göring's appointment to this highly important post would aggravate factional strife among the National Socialist Party heads to a degree which might lead to another June 30.

The Reichswehr knows the importance of going along with Hitler and Göring, the two men who created the political basis for German rearmament. But its leaders hold that the integrity of the troops must suffer if the new recruits continue as heretofore to be forced into the Nazi fold. It is generally admitted that there are many former Social Democrats and Communists among the men now being recruited from the SA and the Steel Helmets into the Reichswehr, men who have demonstrated that they cannot be won for the Nazi cause. The Reichswehr is also decidedly opposed to National Socialist political instruction in the army, under the direction of Minister of Propaganda Goebbels.

More important still as a symptom of the shift in National Socialist policy is the pensioning off of Gottfried Feder, author of the original National Socialist program. In "My Battle" Hitler attributes to Feder "everything I have learned of the necessity of a national revolution." Immediately after the *Führer's* appointment to the Chancellorship, Feder was made undersecretary in the Ministry of Economics, where he soon came into conflict with his chief, Dr. Karl Schmitt. He was removed from the ministry and given the much less important post of Commissar for Suburban Land Settlement. For his insistence on the enforcement of the National Socialist program he was again removed from office and appointed to the professorship from which he was pensioned a few weeks ago.

Feder's retirement is important because he and Agricultural Minister Darré were the last prominent representatives of the Nazi doctrine of "blood and soil." Germany's peasantry had looked to the National Socialist regime to solve its immediate problems at the expense of the Junkers, whose tremendous holdings were to be used to provide land for the sons of the poor farmers. How completely the Nazi regime has failed to satisfy the farming population was made clear recently by the "coordinated" *Frankfurter Zeitung,* which reported that the farmers in several districts were refusing to pay their taxes and to meet their debts, and were in open rebellion against National Socialist winter relief, concealing their crop surplus to prevent confiscation.

Much as they may differ among themselves in their personal, political, and economic points of view, Feder, Darré, Goebbels, and the leader of the Labor Front, Dr. Ley, are united in their opposition to the "System Schacht." The president of the Reichsbank is fighting on two fronts—against the export industries, which blame his inflexible financial policies for Germany's failure to recover its lost export trade, and against the "socialist" wing of the Hitler party, which insists on higher wages to offset rising prices.

Adolf Hitler has stood by Schacht through the vicissitudes of the last year—even to the extent of sacrificing the friendship of the two greatest industrialists of Germany, Thyssen and Krupp. He has bestowed tremendous power upon this man, whose record for reliability and efficiency is doubtful to say the least. Yet it is not impossible that the world will learn one of these days that Germany's economic dictator has gone the way of Feder and so many others before him, scapegoats for Hitler's failure to meet the exigencies of an increasingly difficult situation.

Hitler's Germany is facing difficult days. A begging campaign that brought cabinet ministers to the streets with collection boxes has failed to alleviate the sufferings of the middle and lower classes. But so far the Third Reich stands firm. Despite confusion in the government and conflicts of interest among capitalist groups, against the industrial and peasant masses they stand together. Opposition to the National Socialist regime is only in the first stages of organization. Nevertheless, inner disintegration continues, and the opposition of the masses grows in strength. The millennium which Hitler predicted for his regime will end before many years have passed, and people will realize that it only *seemed* like a thousand years.

Lo, the Poor Utilities!

IF the New York public utilities are faced by the most severe crisis in their history, they have only their own stupidity to thank. Accustomed for years to assess charges without any genuine regard for costs, they sought callously to transfer the city's 3 per cent tax for unemployment relief to the consumer by a 7 to 8 per cent increase in rates. In this they were blocked by the Public Service Commission on the ground that the prevailing rates were already excessive. Doubtless the utilities were prepared for at least a delay, but what they apparently had not counted on was the city's reaction to their effort to attach a surcharge of 4.4 to 6.9 per cent on the existing rates for current purchased by the municipality. It must have been a shock to them when Commissioner Davidson rejected their bids with a pointed reminder that existing charges were already from 37 to 68 per cent above the rates for comparable service elsewhere in the country, and still more disturbing when Mayor LaGuardia departed for Washington and returned within twenty-four hours with a definite promise that the PWA would advance sufficient funds for the construction of a municipal power plant to supply city and federal needs. It is even hinted that the new plant might offer current to the public at rates substantially lower than those now charged.

And as if these troubles were not enough, the state legislative committee investigating utilities chose this moment to open hearings in New York. Evidence was presented show-

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ing that various companies had watered their assets to justify existing rates, and that the industry had maintained close connection with both the Republican and the Democratic organization. Most interesting, however, was the proposal to establish municipal plants in certain cities as a yardstick by which fair rates might be determined. Considerable success was reported where this scheme had been tried. In Cleveland, for example, the private company, after years of fighting, had won the right to charge ten cents a kilowatt hour, but when obliged to compete with current from the municipal plant at 3 cents a kilowatt hour, it hastily reduced its rates to 5 cents. Threatened with widespread adoption of "yardstick" plants, several of the upstate companies have already indicated a willingness to make moderate reductions.

The extent to which the utilities are really frightened by the recent turn of events is illustrated by the almost hysterical letter which Thomas N. McCarter, president of the Edison Electric Institute, recently addressed to President Roosevelt. Mr. McCarter spoke touchingly of the "multitude of investors who see their life savings in jeopardy." He sought to defend the prevailing rates on the ground that they have been scientifically determined and that their burden, after all, is slight in comparison with the amount which persons normally spend for food, clothing, and other necessities. Even the cost of operating our national, state, and local governments, he continued, as reflected by the burden of taxation on the individual is "nearly ten times the amount of the electrical item in the budget." Having thus drawn up a clean bill of health for the much-abused utilities, he besought the President to cooperate with them by requesting prompt action by the Supreme Court in testing the legality of TVA legislation. In reply to Mr. McCarter's plea, Frank R. McNinch, chairman of the Federal Power Commission, pointed out that while it is true that the average electric bill in this country is less than $3 a month, the Canadian consumer pays only $2.24 and obtains twice as much electricity. He also reminded Mr. McCarter that more than half of the Canadian power is generated in publicly owned plants.

In an attempt to defend the position of the utilities, Frank W. Smith, president of the New York Edison Company, in a speech which was reprinted as a half-page advertisement in all the leading New York newspapers, made a desperate plea against the threatened "experiment in municipal *socialism*" and laid the blame for his company's high rates on excessive taxation. He asserted that the operating taxes of the companies which he represented were almost nine times as high as in 1914 and 78 per cent higher than in 1928. He did not deny, however, Commissioner Davidson's charge that in spite of taxation five of the principal electric companies in the Consolidated Gas System have paid a quarter of a billion dollars in dividends to the parent company during the past five years. Thus while the utilities are on the defensive as they have never been since the development of their vast interlocking empire, it is evident that they are still wholly unrepentant. Although the Public Service Commission has ordered a reduction of rates in New York City on several occasions within the past eighteen months, the companies have resorted to every conceivable device to prevent the new schedules from coming into effect. Nothing short of a competing municipal plant is likely to bring them to terms. Recognizing this, Mayor LaGuardia should allow nothing to deflect him from his purpose. Even though the resultant daily saving is, as Mr. McCarter asserts, "less than the cost of a package of cigarettes," it is right that the consumer should have it rather than the group of racketeers who now dominate the industry.

For Art's Sake?

"ART for art's sake" is no one's slogan today, but the phrase is not permitted to die. As an accusation, at least, you may still hear it hurled in arguments more remarkable for heat than for light, and like many another unfortunate catchword it survives to confuse discussions which might otherwise get farther than they commonly do. Perhaps it once served the purpose of startling an audience, but it has long outlived any usefulness it may have had, and we propose here to bury it, without, we confess, too confident a hope that the funeral will be generally recognized or that the corpse will be allowed to rest in peace.

Obviously the phrase in itself is the purest nonsense. The most solitary poet who ever soliloquized a poem which he never intended to write or utter was at least talking to himself and not to Poetry or the Art of Versification. He was creating art for the sake of a man if not for the sake of mankind, and art cannot exist for art's sake unless paintings can contemplate themselves or novels read their own pages. There is, to be sure, a point at issue, but never was an issue worse defined than when the debate is allowed to rage over art for art's sake versus art for humanity's sake. The real question is not whether literature and music and the rest exist for man or themselves; it is simply what kind of service they can or should perform, and that question is one which can at least be debated in intelligible terms.

It is also, to be sure, the only one that any sensible person ever wanted to debate, no matter how badly he may have formulated his position, and fortunately it can be stated in very simple terms if only the disputants can be persuaded to use them. If art is merely a means toward ends commonly pursued by other means also, if it serves man in the same way that education and preaching and oratory are supposed to serve him, then it may properly be judged in accordance with its effectiveness in promoting those ends. But if, on the contrary, it serves him in some way of its own, if it employs certain faculties and supplies certain delights otherwise unemployed and otherwise unknown, then it must be judged by its effectiveness in doing just that, and anyone who opposes it for political reasons is as absurd as he would be if he regarded fresh air, good food, and the pleasures of exercise as necessarily corrupt because they have been most accessible to members of a hated class.

We have, be it understood, no intention of debating the question here. We leave to other disputants the mysteries of the aesthetic experience and the attempt to decide—granting that it exists at all—how much and in which way it differs from experiences of a different kind. But we insist that the question is the only one worth debating, and that to attempt to choose between art for propaganda and art for art's sake is to create a dilemma which is completely unreal. The question is not whether art should exist for humanity, but what it is that art can do for that humanity to which it so obviously belongs.

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Issues and Men

Middle West and Texas in December

DARK, somber skies; in Illinois's Egypt the added disheartening pall of soft-coal smoke; during two weeks no sign of the sun. Flurries of snow and freezing temperature add to the discomfort. Not many rays of encouragement but some, and everywhere amazing courage and confidence. People sound resigned, accustomed to bad times; complaints are few and far between. Indeed, they are certain to tell you that things are not as bad in their town as they hear conditions are elsewhere—local pride to the front again. Even those who are deeply stirred intellectually and emotionally by the plight of the country and its struggle for safety and prosperity stress little the actual suffering around them. There are many of these, and they are looking forward to great changes; they ask you eagerly: "How soon will Mr. Roosevelt make it clear that he is going to the left?" Yet it would be idle to say either that a revolt is at hand or that a revolutionary mood is abroad in the land. The people I met were eager for change, but patient (I got into no working-class groups). No one has yet stirred their hearts to mutiny and rage.

But there is much thoughtful dissatisfaction. The colleges and universities report increased enrolments. Everywhere college teachers declare that their students are showing an unprecedented interest in public affairs; students have in some degree begun to feel that they must know more about what is going on and what it signifies for them and their future. In every college community I found groups who put into moving words the gratitude they feel for *The Nation's* long fight for liberalism and progress, for its point of view, its program, the hope that it brings to them every week. I enjoyed the privilege of being the first speaker at three new forums; from what I hear they are springing up everywhere. There is a great urge to discuss, and hear discussed, the issues of the hour. In one western Pennsylvania mining town, conservative by all its traditions, 125 men of the leading Protestant church decided last fall that they were going to have a forum in order to know more about what was happening in the United States. They underwrote the expenses and invited liberals and progressives to speak, men whom a few years ago they would probably have shunned. On a cold, raw, blustery Sunday afternoon that church was packed with persons come to hear the story of the munitions makers.

Not always, of course, is there such tolerance or eagerness to hear the unfamiliar side. Thus the Y. M. C. A. in the home of Abraham Lincoln felt that the contributing editor of *The Nation* was still "too dangerous" to be heard before its forum! The dissentients got together, brought the aforesaid editor to Springfield, and informed him with unholy joy that in his place the conservative forum had accepted—Max Eastman, friend of Communists and devoted defender of Trotzky. They reported that later in self-defense the Y. M. C. A. group declared it had thought Max was Joseph B. Eastman, Federal Coordinator of Railroads! Such are some of our lay guides to heaven. But the church itself I found stirring everywhere. Many churches are open to liberal thought where campuses are still closed. They reflect vigorously the newer attitude of revolt against war and all its attributes.

Wherever I asked about conditions in any locality, the encouraging reply was that things were distinctly better than a year ago, and the farther I got into the Southwest the more emphatic was the report that there had been a great gain in the last twelve months. This was particularly true in cities like Decatur, Illinois, with a farming hinterland, for the farmers are admittedly much better off because of the high prices of wheat, corn, and soy beans. When I asked, however, if there were still many unemployed, the answer was invariably: "Yes, about as many as last year; our factories are not doing any better." In other words, the increased retail sales were due to the farmers' purchases. The heavy industries are, as the figures clearly show, not gaining; Pittsburgh, by the way, rejoices in the cleanest air it has enjoyed in the memory of men, the price of this being countless smokeless chimneys. As for the unemployed load, the communities visited seemed to be shouldering that now as a matter of course. In St. Louis, however, there is much restlessness among the destitute, somewhat stirred up by Communists. But when bona fide unemployed came to the City Hall to protest recently, they had the usual experience of being denied their constitutional rights to approach their rulers in free assembly with free speech, were roughly treated by the police, and then given absolutely outrageous sentences.

In Texas the scene was vastly brighter—the sun brilliant, the weather beyond improvement. It reflected the cheerful mood of the people. If one sees vacant stores and empty houses, the general air is none the less one of cheer. Even the cotton exporters, whose businesses have been shot to pieces by the policies of the Department of Agriculture, growled much less than one would have expected, and the farmers overwhelmingly sustained in their balloting the Bankhead Cotton Act and approved its extension for another year. Houston reported imports and exports for 1933 larger than ever before, and the figures for this year are surpassing those of 1933. As in every large harbor that I have visited in the past year, there were steamers loading scrap iron for Japan—the wonder is that there is any left in the United States. The one bad note related to the really Forgotten Man in America—the Negro. His plight on the farms and ranches is described as overwhelmingly bad, bearable only because he has so long been accustomed to next to nothing. That there is practical economic slavery no one denies. But Dallas, Houston, and Galveston are cheerful and confident. The newspapers report increased advertising; the hotels were crowded; business is nearly as usual, always excepting heavy industry.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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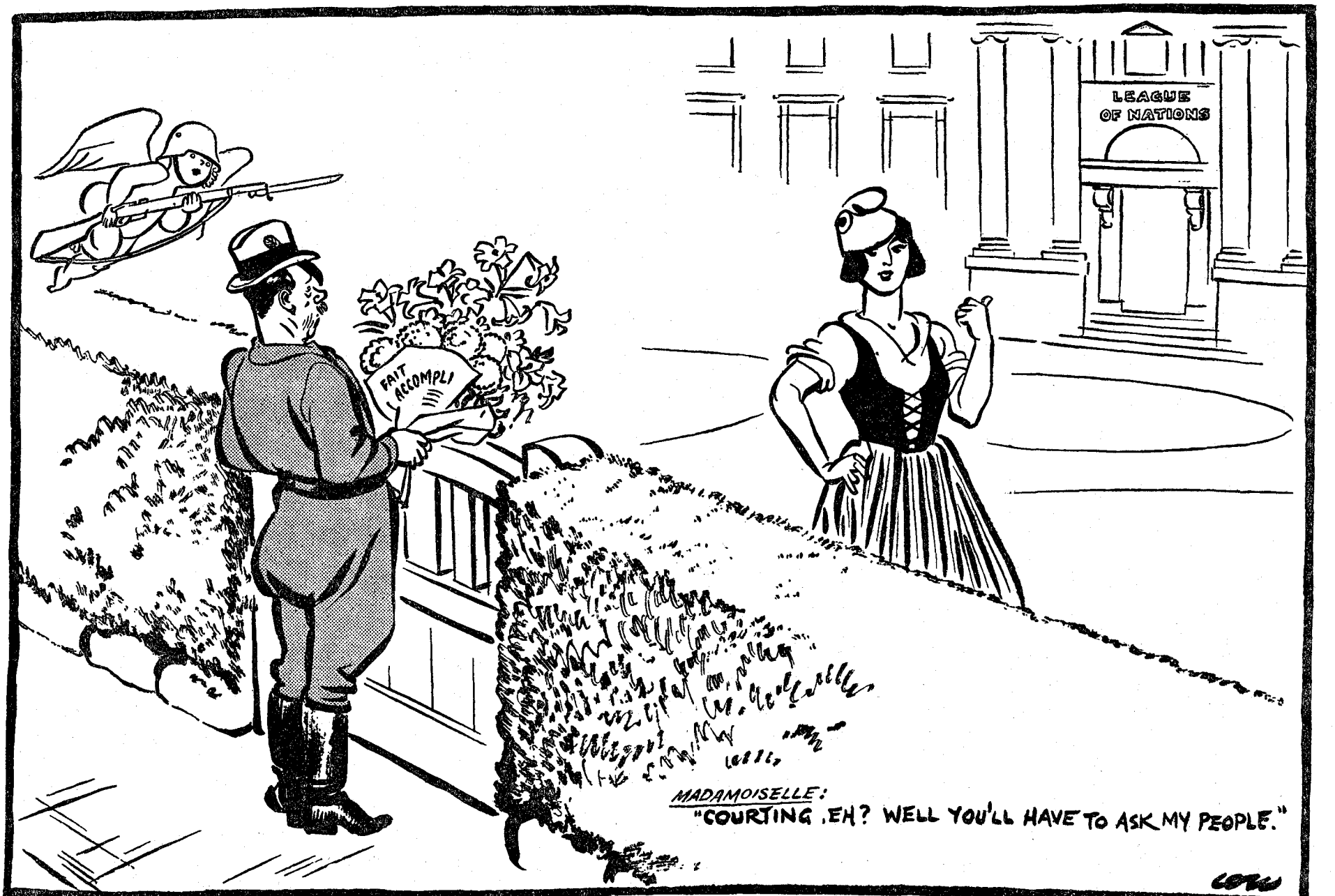
A Cartoon by LOW



HANDSOME ADOLF'S ROMANCE.

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Father Coughlin

II. The Phase of Action

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

FATHER COUGHLIN, in launching the National League for Social Justice, carefully avoided saying anything about a new political party. Before details of the scheme were made public he spoke simply of setting up a national lobby, which he hoped would have five million members. The scheme itself proved to be far more ambitious. It is to be organized first by local units, then by Congressional districts, which will send delegates to state conventions, which in turn will send delegates to a national convention, "where the principles and policies of the organization will be further determined." A lobby that holds state and national conventions is of course not a lobby, but a potential political party. A few weeks before it was launched, when its form and principles must have been well defined in Father Coughlin's mind, he spoke at a political banquet in Detroit. The political campaign was at its zenith. He had been expected to support the Democrats as New Dealers, at least by implication. He astonished his audience by predicting that in twelve years both the Democratic and the Republican Party would have disappeared. In their stead, he went on, would be born a conservative and a liberal party. He prophesied the achievement of certain reforms in the twelve years, some of which not surprisingly were to be found later among the sixteen planks of his platform.

That Father Coughlin should not be explicit about his intentions is in keeping with his mentality. He is not the explicit kind of person. The reporters in Detroit, for whom his Sunday discourses are a recurring chore, complain that while he sounds convincing over the air he does not often use the factual material which makes it possible to write a readable story. He will start many a quotable affirmation, and then add a few words which make one wonder what it is all about. It is important to appreciate this characteristic, for it reveals the man and the nature of his potential action. A significant instance is to be found in one of his sixteen planks. It is the tenth, on collective bargaining. "I believe," says Father Coughlin, "not only in the right of the laboring man to organize in unions, but also in the duty of the government to facilitate and protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth and of intellect." This is clear down to the last two words. But what are the "vested interests of intellect" against which the government must protect labor unions? Is it only a phrase thrown in for rhetorical effect, on the assumption that radio listeners have a prejudice against intellectuals? Or does an intent lurk behind the words? In an interview in the Detroit *Times* on October 10, when this phrase already must have been formulated, he stated: "Make the Department of Labor a real power! Let it take over the functions of collective bargaining—the functions which the A. F. of L. is now trying to fulfil. Let it supplant the A. F. of L. entirely. Why should the workers pay dues to a labor organization to protect a right which is guaranteed by law? The service of the federation should be a government service paid for by taxation." The "vested interests of intellect," then, are apparently the labor union heads, and the plank on collective bargaining takes on an entirely different meaning. Germany and Italy, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, have government-organized unions. Which is Father Coughlin thinking of? The question is easily answered: he is a foe of communism. "Strikes and lockouts are absolutely unnecessary," he declared in a recent discourse. He wants a fascist solution of the labor problem.

But Father Coughlin does not often explain himself in parallel statements. As a rule he sticks to rhetoric and remains incomprehensible. Thus he denounces un-Christian American capitalism because it runs its production exclusively for profit. At the same time he denounces communism, whose production is for use. Christian capitalism, he goes on to say, is "production for use at a profit." Now what the essential difference is between production for profit and production for use at a profit Father Coughlin, so far as I know, has never clearly set forth. Maybe, as in the question of collective bargaining, he has concrete ideas and really means government-controlled production with the retention of the profit system, another fascist conception. I admit I am only guessing. But a platform which omits any reference to free speech and even democracy entitles one to this kind of guess.

After reading and hearing many of his speeches I am struck by their technical similarity to those of Hitler. These, too, are vague and emotional. Carefully analyzed they do not read as radical as they sound. Like Hitler's, the priest's speeches tap the underlying prejudices of listeners. Hitler for years played chiefly on the resentment against the Versailles treaty and against social conditions. Coughlin plays on the widespread animosity toward the bankers and the yearning for social justice. A minimum of explicitness and a maximum of feeling seem to make the best formula for founders of new movements. Whether Father Coughlin knows this, and is deliberately vague, only he can say. And he alone can unfold the secret of his ambitions, and what he foresees as his role in the next years. He is in close contact with the Committee for the Nation. The Detroit *News* of November 21 reported that five groups—the Committee of the Nation, the National Grange, the American Farm Federation, the National Farm Union, and the Sound Money League—had come to an agreement with Father Coughlin. This he denies. He says he still is a New Dealer, but he has cooled off a good deal about President Roosevelt and makes disparaging remarks about him in private. Publicly he asserts that if Roosevelt fails he will be followed by a dictator. If he thinks of himself as this dictator he does not announce it, and naturally would not. Nor does he say it would content him to be the power behind the throne. But more nearly than any demagogue in America he has the formula for a fascist party, a semi-radical program which is "safe" on the labor question, which guarantees the profit system, and which appeals simultaneously to agriculture, the middle class, and the big employer. Already he is first in the field with this

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kind of party, and he must know that no other fascist movement can grow in this country without him.

Let us consider for a moment what kind of man he is. He is likable. Once a caller reaches him—and he can make himself as inaccessible as a bank president—he finds him quite the human being. He is quick, intelligent, friendly, unpretentious in his dealings, leaps up and paces the floor, talks in a flood of language. He smokes cigarettes endlessly, he dots his conversation with manly-sounding "damns" and "hells." Furthermore, he is sincere, if sincerity means that the aim of his enterprise is not to line his own pockets. But ambition preys on his soul. Writing a foreword to a recent book on his work he unwittingly revealed how near the surface of consciousness his lust for power lies:

> Do you know how I would live if I renounced religion and was illogical enough to disbelieve in a life beyond—in the real life? Why, if I threw away and denounced my faith, I would surround myself with the most adroit highjackers, learn every trick of the highest banking and stock manipulations, avail myself of the laws under which to hide my own crimes, create a smoke screen to throw into the eyes of men, and—believe me—I would become the world's champion crook. If I didn't believe in religion and in a happy beyond I would get everything for myself that I could lay hands on in the world.

Fortunately, most people do not need either religious faith or a belief in eternity to keep them from becoming world-champion crooks.

In type he is an actor, with an advanced sense of stage management. He plays several roles. He may talk to his visitor as the Builder of the Church, as the Martyr Who Is Being Misunderstood, as the New Dealer, as the Social Philosopher. Few visitors get to know the real Father Coughlin, perhaps because there is no real Father Coughlin. The reality may be just this succession of parts. If his visitor is to be impressed, he is received in the top tower room at the Shrine of the Little Flower, and the conversation gets under way. A secretary will open the door: "The Governor of Pennsylvania is on the telephone." The Father begins speaking at the telephone. "How do you do, Governor. . . . Oh, no, Governor, I don't think I would use the troops in the mining crisis. . . . I am sure there is some better way of handling the situation. . . . Yes, I will think it over and let you know." Then conversation proceeds with the visitor. Again the secretary appears at the door: "Professor Raymond Moley wants to speak to you by long distance." Father Coughlin waves his hand impatiently. "Tell Professor Moley I am busy and will call him later."

This was one visitor's actual experience. I cannot say that Governor Pinchot and Professor Moley did not call up on that occasion. But the visitor thought Father Coughlin was trying to impress him. Skepticism is expressed in Detroit, too, about the famous "bomb" found in Father Coughlin's home during his affray with the Detroit *Free Press*. It consisted of a large cardboard box of powder with a long fuse, and was found, unlighted, in the basement of the priest's home. Nobody suggests that Father Coughlin placed it there himself, and then conveniently found it. But nobody believes that the Detroit *Free Press* and the bankers of Detroit, whom Father Coughlin was fighting at the time, placed it there. The upshot of the discovery was that the priest had some passing glory from being in personal peril for fighting the financial powers of Detroit. The police never discovered who planted the "bomb" and quietly dropped the investigation.

The Detroit *Free Press* brought out the fact that Father Coughlin, while denouncing Wall Street, was using the services of a Wall Street broker to handle some of his funds. The *Free Press* called it speculation. Father Coughlin replied he was investing, as he had a right to do, and the money anyway was not his, it belonged to his radio league. Then when the government published the list of all holders of silver, the largest in Michigan proved to be the young woman who was secretary of Father Coughlin's organization. She had 500,000 ounces, at the very time when Father Coughlin was crying over the radio: "The restoration of silver to its proper value is of Christian concern. I send to you a call for the mobilization of all Christianity against the god of gold." The priest, in other words, was trying to boost the price of silver from which his own undertaking was going to profit. This probably comes near the border line where ecclesiastical censure might be forthcoming. But when the truth transpired, it did not flurry the priest. He denied that he would personally benefit from the silver speculation; he said that he had always advocated the purchase of American commodities and allied himself with the President in anticipating an increase in the price of silver. But I have the impression that it is foolish to accuse Father Coughlin of profiting from these deals personally, or indeed of profiting financially from his radio activities. He was accused of having underpaid his income tax. A government investigation was made, and $8 which he had paid was refunded to him; he was actually below the lowest income-tax bracket. I see no reason to doubt it. Father Coughlin is a good actor and he is colossally ambitious, but avarice is not his weakness. He lives unpretentiously. He has simple tastes. And if he now can occupy a handsome tower with a staff of over a hundred clerical helpers, travel freely, and when in Washington live in a suite in the Mayflower, that is hardly a great pecuniary gain. The man is much more comprehensible if he is believed to be not cheaply and irreverently dishonest in money matters. He is at least worth taking seriously.

Knowing that Father Coughlin, during the automobile strike last spring, had spoken sympathetically of company unions and had criticized the A. F. of L., one might also assume that large if secret contributions come to him from the grateful automobile manufacturers of the Detroit district. But this does not appear to be true. The Fisher brothers are Catholics, and their mother belongs to the Royal Oak parish, so they are supposed to have contributed generously to build the church. But I was assured in Detroit that the automobile manufacturers are much too "dumb" in such matters to appreciate that Father Coughlin is a comfortable man to have about in a city which is 52 per cent Catholic. Quite childishly they loath him for his attack on the bankers, and like most people think he is as radical as he sounds, and fear him.

Nobody outside the organization gets to read his letters. He says he has 2,000,000 names on file, and someone to whom he showed his filing-room asked to see the list from his home county in a nearby state. Father Coughlin at once complied. He pulled out a great handful of cards, several inches thick. The visitor went over them; the names were of persons he knew, and they pretty well covered the county. Father

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Coughlin recognizes that his letters are his stock in trade. "I believe I possess in them the greatest human document in our times," he says; "I am not boasting when I say that I know the pulse of the people. I am not exaggerating when I tell you of their demand for social justice which is sweeping like a tidal wave over this country."

If Father Coughlin has hopes of leading a radical-fascist party, the attitude toward him of the Catholic church becomes of signal importance. He says that he maintains offices in Rome, Geneva, New York, and Michigan. The Rome office might be the liaison between his League for Social Justice and the Vatican. Evidence on this would be hard to find. So far Father Coughlin, even though preaching good Catholic liberalism based four-square on the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, has had a mixed reception from his coreligionists in America. Three times Cardinal O'Connell has criticized him, and after the organization of the new league he denied the right of Father Coughlin to speak for the Catholic church in America. In New York many Catholics are intent on keeping him out of the city, since his speech in the Hippodrome which drew 8,000 into the hall and a mob of 30,000 outside it. Al Smith in the *New Outlook* called him a "crackpot," and he came back with the charge that Smith had tried to borrow money from Morgan. No doubt many Catholics feel the cause of the church would not be served by a new party under the guidance of the forty-three-year-old priest. The feud with Cardinal O'Connell may bring the issue to a head. Father Coughlin was not cowed by the red hat in Boston. He slashed back viciously, charging the conservative Cardinal himself with failure to preach the doctrines of the church. He openly paraded the protection he had in this attack from his Detroit Bishop, Michael Gallagher. Gallagher, now a white-haired veteran, has always been a bit of a radical himself. He was an ardent Irish patriot, was bitterly anti-British during the war, and made a stir by letting De Valera hold one of his big meetings in Detroit at a time when hostility to Britain counted as almost un-American. The Vatican, one can imagine, is piqued and interested, and greatly puzzled too. The church looks far back in history and can look far ahead into the future. Does it speculate on what will happen if Roosevelt fails? Does it foresee dictatorship in America, and recall the spirit of the Ku Klux Klan and appraise the latent intolerance of the American mob? It may argue that there is something to be said for a priest who would save Catholicism from persecution in a fascist era. But if the new league is a flop, if the radio priest is not a flaming comet in the heavens but just another meteor, the church would suffer. And the success of the league is no foregone conclusion. It is one thing for a man to appeal to a national audience as a disembodied voice, almost sacredly disinterested by virtue of his being a priest, and another for him to get into the welter of vulgar political action. The league may be Father Coughlin's great mistake. History may record that like Napoleon, to quote Artemus Ward, he tried to do too much and did it. At any rate, the church is in business for the time being. On the Sunday when the league was announced Bishop Gallagher appeared for the first time at the microphone with his protege and "introduced" him. Father Coughlin needed no introduction to his own radio audience. Bishop Gallagher was the newcomer. He had been brought in to give importance to the occasion. Official sponsorship could not have been more deliberate.

[*Part I of Mr. Swing's discussion of Father Coughlin appeared in last week's issue. Next week will appear his first article on Huey Long.*]

Russia Abolishes Bread Cards

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, December 1

THE food-rationing system is abolished as from January 1, 1935. This action has considerable significance. The Bolsheviks would not have taken it if they had thought that a war was imminent, for there would be no sense in eliminating bread cards only to reintroduce them in three or six months. No doubt the menace of a foreign attack, which the Soviets have exaggerated these many years, remains, yet the elimination of the rationing system in the cities will enrich and mollify the villages and thus further reduce the likelihood of invasion. For war against the Soviet Union would be in part a gamble on peasant disaffection; the world outside has always underestimated the internal strength of the red regime. The suppression of the bread cards will make the countryside more prosperous and hence more loyal. At one and the same time, therefore, the action reflects a lessened fear of war and likewise lessens the chances of war. The government should accordingly be in a position to transfer some of the energy and materials now employed in military-defense activities to the gratification of popular consumption requirements and thereby still further improve the mood and condition of the civilian population.

The cashiering of the bread cards means not only that there is now enough bread in the country to satisfy the demand, but that there is every likelihood of normal agricultural production and normal retail distribution in the future. The destructive phase of agrarian collectivization is at an end, and the socialist village can now feed the socialist city. Bread cards were introduced in 1928 because the capitalistic peasantry could not and would not grow enough food. Since then Soviet agriculture has passed through purgatory and hell. The costs and the sacrifices have been great, but the net result is a politically more reliable and an economically more productive collectivized village. Before collectivization the Soviet system was Janus-faced: one face looked up the red road toward socialism; the other wore the well-known features of the Russian mujik. Before collectivization the Soviet system stood on one leg, the socialist city. Today, by a painful and tortuous process, the regime has acquired a more homogeneous character and a firmer footing. Bolshevism now has one face and two legs.

At present three-quarters of all peasant households and 90 per cent of all land in the U. S. S. R. are collectivized. Imagine that collectivization had never taken place. The

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city would nevertheless have proceeded with its industrialization and expansion. The city has given the *kolhozi* 281,000 tractors, 33,000 combines, 34,000 motor trucks, and more than two million seeders, threshing machines, and harvesting machines. Suppose this equipment were now the private possession of private farmers. Those farmers would be a powerful capitalistic force. By mechanizing private agriculture the industrialized city would have been intrenching in power its own enemy. The thing is inconceivable, and it is one of the reasons why collectivization had to come with industrialization. For if the Bolsheviks had mechanized the village and then tried to collectivize it, the difficulties and expense would have been even greater than they were.

Today, having paid the heavy toll, Soviet socialized agriculture is on the up grade. It is not much of an achievement that Russia has enough bread. But when one recalls that as late as 1932, partly through crop failure but mostly through peasant sabotage, there was a definite food deficit, when one remembers that millions more now consume in the cities while millions less produce in the villages, when one considers that collectivization was accompanied by a tremendous diminution in the number of horses and other working animals, when one thinks of all the chaos brought about by the reorganization of life, work, and thought processes incident to collectivization, then Soviet agriculture's rapid turning of the corner is not a small triumph.

Bread will now be sold in an augmented number of state and cooperative stores at one fixed price and in unlimited quantities. As a matter of fact, the rationing system had broken down before it was relinquished. According to the *Pravda,* a quantity of bread equal to 44 per cent of the bread distributed on cards is now being sold in commercial stores, where the size of purchases is not limited. This commercial bread is of far better quality, and people prefer it despite its higher price. Moreover, the ugly red tape, the innumerable questionnaires which every citizen had to fill in before receiving a card, the stealing and other abuses, the speculation by workers who got double and therefore excess rations—all these were demoralizing and irritating and so costly that the government will save huge sums by releasing bread from the restrictions. Nevertheless, prices will be raised. The new price, beginning January 1, 1935, will be a mean between the low artificial ration-card price and the high commercial price, but all persons gainfully employed will be granted wage increases equal to the rise in the price of the bread they now consume. The worker will reap some small advantage because he will buy less bread. There will be no inflation because the wage-rise money will come back to the exchequer in the form of bread-price increases. The chief difference will be that with higher price levels the government will pay the peasants more for their grain. Growers of tobacco, cotton, flax, and other industrial crops will likewise receive higher compensation. Otherwise there would have been a rush to grow cereals.

The announcement of the abandonment of the card system states that the rationing of some other products will also be discontinued and that the prices of manufactured commodities are to be brought down. The peasant with his larger income will consequently be able to buy more factory goods. The city employee with his unchanged income will benefit too, but relatively less than the *kolhoz* member. Just as the elimination of bread cards reflects the greater supply of bread, so the reduction of goods prices reflects the availability of more manufactured articles. Here, therefore, in concrete, undeniable form, is proof of the agricultural and industrial progress of the Soviet Union. Persons living in or visiting this country can see with their own eyes the daily increase in the kinds and the volume of city goods sold in stores, as well as the daily rise in living standards. Hitherto the impartial observer could pass on this information and ask to be believed. Now these official measures offer incontrovertible proof. I do not mean to suggest, however, that supplies are now adequate. They are only bigger.

The ration system was inaugurated in 1928 not so much because the city was underfed as because the peasant came into town and bought up the city's bread. If there were much danger of a return to this condition, the system would have been retained. I think the lifting of restrictions on bread sales will actually reduce the amount of bread sold in urban centers, for under the card distribution much bread was bought only to be exchanged for other products. My maid, for instance, regularly pays with bread for the milk she buys from the peasant women who bring it into Moscow. She is not alone in this practice. But of late the women refuse to take bread. They have enough of it themselves. And the exchange value of bread has fallen.

The repeal of the ration system for bread and some other foods points the way to a new system of Soviet distribution. The moment there was enough bread in the country and enough goods to pay for the bread, restrictions were cast off and a uniform price was established. Ultimately, the same course will be followed with every other article of consumption. At present one can buy meat at one price in a cooperative store on cards, at another and higher price in a closed factory cooperative, and at a third and still higher price in a commercial store. Those who have access to the closed cooperative are privileged. The moment there is enough meat to go around, one price will be fixed, limitations will be abolished, and the closed cooperatives will become unnecessary. All prices of all commodities in commercial stores and markets have been falling sharply—obviously a result of bigger supplies.

The Soviet ruble is not tied to gold, although, technically, part of the currency has a gold coverage. The value of the ruble is determined by the volume of goods in the country. In 1931, when there was scarcely anything to buy here, the ruble was practically worthless. And it was constantly depreciating. Now it is valuable and appreciating. For the first time, as far as I can recall, the existence of inflation is now officially recognized: the decree abolishing rationing speaks of the "Soviet ruble which is growing stronger." In the eyes of the government it was never officially weak. Actually it was very weak. The Soviet Union is on the road to a stable currency based on a sufficient supply of food and manufactured goods.

There will remain, after January 1, 1935, many closed cooperatives where the lucky can buy at reduced prices. The government proposes gradually to wipe out these stores for the privileged. Everything will be sold in open commercial stores at one price. Inequality, which the Bolsheviks encourage, will then express itself in the inequality of wages based on varying training and talents but not in inequality of opportunity arising out of varying social or official position, as at present.

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In Support of the Constitution

By CARL BECKER

Ithaca, New York, December 15

IN compliance with the Ives law, an official of Cornell University recently requested me to sign the following statement: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of New York, and that I will faithfully discharge, according to the best of my ability, the duties of the position to which I am now assigned."

After reading this statement carefully, I signed it, willingly and without resentment. I always wish to conform to the laws, and in this instance there was no difficulty in doing so, since this law, so far as I could see, neither deprived me of any rights that I formerly had nor imposed upon me any duties not already imposed. There was even a certain advantage in having the statement presented for my signature: it made me think about the obligation of citizens to support the Constitution and the laws. I asked this question: Are citizens not obliged to support the Constitution and the laws unless they take an oath to do so? Applying a well-known rule for interpreting legal documents, one might infer that formerly no citizens of New York, except public officials taking such an oath, were so obliged, and that now no citizens except public officials and teachers are so obliged. That was a new and intriguing idea. I had taken it for granted that all citizens are obligated to support the laws; and with the best will in the world I still fail to see what meaning any law can have if it has not the one meaning without which it would not be a law—namely, that all citizens are obligated to conform to its provisions. What, then, does the Ives law mean? So far as I can see, nothing except this: that teachers in New York State are obliged to acknowledge in writing that they are obligated by the obligations imposed upon them by the duties they have assumed, and by the obligations imposed upon all citizens by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York.

Having reached this conclusion, I asked another question: Does the New York Legislature think that a subordinate authority can make an obligation imposed by a superior authority any more obligatory than it already is? The Constitution of the United States, so I have at least been told, is the supreme law of the land. The Constitution of the State of New York is, within limits defined by the Constitution of the United States, the supreme law of New York State. The New York Legislature is a subordinate authority, its jurisdiction being defined by provisions in both constitutions. It has no authority to modify either constitution, nor can it create any rights or duties not explicitly or implicitly authorized by one or the other of the two constitutions. I can make nothing of the Ives law as a legal document except that it is a redundancy, unless it be also an impertinence: by enacting it, the New York Legislature presumes to reimpose obligations already imposed by the supreme law of the land.

All this laborious thinking led me to ask a third question: Have I up to now "supported" the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York, and have I faithfully "discharged" the duties of "the position to which I am assigned"? Taking the first point first (in literary discourse it is well to be systematic), I feel sure that I have always supported the Constitution of the United States, and that I have supported the Constitution of the State of New York during the seventeen years that I have resided in that State. I intend to go on supporting both constitutions, and as a down payment on that promised intention I hereby declare that the Ives law, in my opinion, was unnecessary and unwise: unnecessary, because it imposes on teachers no obligations that did not already exist, except the formal one of signing the statement quoted above; unwise, because the obligation to sign the statement will irritate many teachers all of the time, without making any of them at any time support the constitution more loyally, or discharge their duties more faithfully, than they did before.

In making this explicit statement about the Ives law, I am clearly "discharging" the duties "of the position to which I am now assigned," and I am "supporting" both the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York. To take the second point first (in literary discourse one should aim at variety), both constitutions rest upon the principle that laws should be enacted by representatives freely chosen by the citizens, and that it is not only the right but the duty of citizens to express, either orally or in print, their approval or disapproval of the conduct of their representatives, and of the laws enacted by them. Both constitutions, unless I am mistaken, contain provisions which guarantee citizens against any infringement, by statute or otherwise, of that right. Happily (returning now to the first point), the "duties of the position to which I am now assigned" do not, so far as I can learn, conflict in any way with my obligation to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York. I am a teacher of history. The duty of a teacher of history, as I understand it, is to learn, and encourage his pupils to learn, what has actually happened in some period of human history, and to discuss with the utmost freedom before his pupils any opinion, judgment, or theory that may be formed about the cause or the effect or the importance of what has happened. The Ives law is something that has happened, and so far as that law is concerned I can "discharge the duties of the position to which I am assigned" only by declaring that it would have been better, in my opinion, if the Governor and Assembly of New York had prevented it from happening. I have now discharged that duty in writing, and I intend, whenever occasion seems fitting, to discharge it orally.

In closing I wish it clearly understood that this expression of an adverse opinion on the Ives law does not exhaust my capacity to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York. I reserve the right, for the future, to support these admirable high authorities by freely expressing my opinion about any social or political question that may arise. If at any time it should seem to me highly desirable to amend or to abolish the Con-

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stitution of the United States or the Constitution of New York State, I shall, availing myself of the principle that "all just governments rest upon the consent of the governed," support both constitutions, and at the same time "faithfully discharge the duties of the position to which I am now assigned," by saying so. At present I am not in favor of abolishing either constitution, nor have I any amendments to propose to either. In times past there have been people who believed that men could be made wise and good by proper laws and constitutions. I have never been convinced of this, but I am open to conviction. When anyone devises a constitution that will make legislators wise enough to know that people cannot be made loyal to the constitution, or faithful in the discharge of their duties, by passing laws requiring them to be so, I will support that constitution as faithfully and loyally as I am now supporting the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New York.

The India Report

By HAROLD J. LASKI

London, December 1

AFTER one hundred and fifty meetings the Joint Parliamentary Committee, known as the Linlithgow committee, has produced its report. Four Conservatives definitely dissent from it; and the four Labor members, headed by Major Attlee, deputy leader of the Opposition, have drafted an alternative report. Since the majority report is signed by the Secretary of State for India, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Sir Austen Chamberlain, as well as by the Liberal members of the committee, it is pretty certain to go through Parliament successfully. Any serious hopes Mr. Churchill and the diehards may have had of defeating the government on the Indian issue are already dead. Outside Lord Salisbury, Mr. Churchill will not be able to count on the support of any important leader in the Conservative Party.

The reason is quite simple. The scheme laid down by the report does not confer executive self-government on India in any shape or form. It leaves essential control in all matters of central government still in London, and even in the provincial sphere it leaves an overriding emergency authority in the hands of the Governor, which means, in the last resort, in London also. That is not all. Every legislature, central and provincial, is to have two chambers, and they are so weighted that the whole emphasis is on the side of property in all of them. Election is to be indirect, and is to be based upon a franchise limited to 14 per cent of the population. No provision is made for the automatic revision of the constitution, except in some non-essential details, whether by Delhi or Westminster; and the army remains under British control without time limit. The princes become a deciding factor in the federal assembly, and they are a body of rulers, with perhaps four exceptions, whose habits would not stand examination by any tribunal of self-respecting persons. Provision is also made against the passage of any "penal" or "discriminatory" legislation which might affect British interests in India. And the whole structure is pivoted upon an Indian Central Bank, the control of which is to be completely outside the political realm.

Everyone, of course, knows that the Indian problem is immensely complex in character, and that there is no justification for attacking it in terms of a simple formula. But I do not think it can be honestly said that these proposals will go any serious distance toward solving it. They are inadequate for a number of reasons. (1) They will not satisfy the legitimate and inescapable demand of all politically-minded Indians for an ample measure of self-government. (2) They are based upon an institutional foundation so conceived as to split up Indians into large fragments of interest, each of which has every possible ground given to it for remaining separate from the community as a whole. (3) Indian economic development is to proceed, not along the lines Indians desire (they may not always be wise lines), but along the lines which leave British economic interests in India fully safeguarded. (4) No provision is made, as was made even in the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of 1919, for periodic revision of the new system; Indians who desire it will have to fight the battle of the last seven years all over again if they want any drastic change. (5) The absence of any adequate arrangements for the Indianization of the army means that the ultimate control is in British hands for an indefinite period. (6) The financial proposals mean that no legislation will be possible of which the Viceroy (still obviously to be a British peer) does not approve; and this means that the keys of Indian finance will continue to rest in London. (7) The whole structure is devised in such a way as to weight the influence of property at every point. The prospect, therefore, of securing under the scheme any effective attention to the problem of poverty in India is practically nil; the very classes which need the protection of the franchise most are excluded from it. (8) The association of the princes with the new system is built upon such a basis that these dubious autocrats will have behind their authority the protective support of the British troops in India; and the eighty million subjects over whom they rule will not only have no direct voice in the federal legislature but also no more means than now of making heard their protests against the grave misgovernment of which they are the victims.

Indian acceptance of the scheme is probable; there is no method of government which some Indian politicians cannot be found willing to work for. Mohammedans generally will welcome it because it gives them a privileged position. The landowners will largely support it because it makes the law and order that will be enforced their law and order. Many Indian capitalists will support it because for a long time to come it safeguards them against the growth of trade unionism and labor legislation in India. The princes will predominantly support it because they receive from it a new lease of life. Many intellectuals, especially the intellectuals with British titles, will support it because they are the people most likely to receive the important posts under the new regime. Finally, I think, "respectable" public opin-

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ion in England will support it for two reasons: first, because it amply safeguards British economic interests in India; and, second, because if it were defeated, the National Government would have to go to the country, with consequences that no "respectable" public opinion is prepared to contemplate.

The report, therefore, seems to me a supreme example of the technique of economic imperialism in action. Something had to be done, after the events of the post-war years in India, to meet the growing demand for self-government. The report therefore offers (a) a considerable enlargement of provincial powers, and (b) a small measure of self-government at the center. But these are conceded upon the saving conditions that over all powers conceded there is an effective British veto; that essential financial control remains British and not Indian; that the army remains essentially a British preserve; that the Indian masses are given no direct relation to the government; that the Conservative influence of the princes is brought in to safeguard a British control with which their influence is skilfully articulated; that if India should later want a revision of the present scheme, she would have to depend once more on persuading a British Parliament that she is "fit" for a further instalment of responsibility. Nothing here, so far as the framework of government is concerned, will make India responsible for her own destinies in the lifetime of any Englishman who has an interest in our connection with India. We retain India as a commercial and financial investment for a period to which no time limit is set.

Nothing in these proposals deals with what is the central problem of India—the intolerable poverty of the masses. To realize what that is one has only to read the pages of the Whisley report on the industrial side. A male worker in the Assam tea gardens earns his keep and from fifteen shillings to one pound per month; a male worker in the cotton mills earns from three pounds twelve shillings to four pounds for the same period; the daily average wage of mine workers in the Jharia coalfield is one shilling and threepence down to eightpence per day. Female labor, of course, earns less still; and the conditions of child labor are literally appalling. Of Indian agriculture and its conditions I will content myself with quoting the opinion of Sir John Megaw, the Director of Public Health in India, made to the Royal Asiatic Society in May, 1934.

> Sixty per cent of the village population are poorly or badly nourished. . . . The country is in a state of emergency which is rapidly passing to one of crisis. . . . The outlook for the future is gloomy to a degree, not only for the masses of the people, who must face the intensified struggle for bare subsistence, but also for the upper classes, whose incomes depend on the production of surplus crops and other commodities. If the entire produce of the soil is needed to provide for the urgent needs of the cultivators, nothing will be left for the payment of rent or revenue . . . the whole social structure of India must inevitably be rudely shaken, if not wholly destroyed.

There is nothing in this report which touches on these conditions. Within the class relations that are implied in its institutional pattern there is no reason to expect an improvement in them. The Atlee report recognizes that poverty is the central issue, but granted its recognition of this, it differs in detail rather than in principle from the majority report. There is a tendency in India to look to the Labor Party in England for a further advance. I do not know what it will say. It is clear that if the report goes into operation, the tendency of a party intensely preoccupied with its own problems will be to evade reopening the Indian issue until the new regime has worked for some time. If the report does fail, the sincerity of the Labor Party as a socialist party will be tested by nothing so much as its willingness fundamentally to revise the whole basis upon which it has been built. For, as things stand, the Indian masses are handed over bound and gagged to the forces of capitalism, British and Indian.

I think, therefore, that the Indian outlook is gloomy indeed. These proposals will not satisfy the demands of articulate and self-conscious political India; and they will do nothing at all to meet the problems of Indian poverty. In so far as they extend Indian control, they extend it to the property-owning class; and even in the degree that they extend it, they retain British hands on the real levers of power. The National Government will beat its diehard critics in the House of Commons, but it will beat them emphatically because it has surrendered to them on all the essentials of their case. The stage is still set for that conflict between British authority and Indian aspirations which the report was supposed to assuage. What it really demonstrates in a decisive way is that capitalist imperialism neither can nor will solve the problems of a subject people.

In the Driftway

THE Drifter has long been a close and loyal friend of Alice in Wonderland, and anything new or surprising about her arouses his interest. Thus he was pleased to be presented with "Logical Nonsense," the complete works of Lewis Carroll (though not, in case any fervent mathematician should want them, the complete works of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), in which he lost himself at once, not only in the mazes of "Alice" and the Looking Glass, but in the delights of the Christ Church belfry which looked like a meatsafe (derivation: belfry—from French *bel,* "beautiful, meet," and from German *frei,* "free, unfettered, safe") and the incomparable syllogisms in "Symbolic Logic": for example, "Some pillows are soft; no pokers are soft; some pokers are not pillows"; and "All wasps are unfriendly; no puppies are unfriendly; puppies are not wasps."

* * * * *

MORE serious, although of considerably less importance, is a small treatise called "Creators of Wonderland," by a young French lady named Mespoulet. Mlle Mespoulet demonstrates with earnest erudition that the famous drawings of Alice, and the White Rabbit, and the pool of tears, and the Frog Footman did not spring full-panoplied from the brow of Master Tenniel, but—to be crude about it—were copied with disconcerting exactitude from the widely known lithographs of the French artist, J. J. Grandeville. Grandeville had his rabbit, his Frog Footman, his Humpty-dumpties, his live flowers, even his Mock Turtle—in which last Tenniel made a number of handsome improvements—and if the Reverend Mr. Dodgson and his artist did not know it, they should have, for the London *Punch,* with Tenniel on its staff, was modeled after the Paris *Charivari,* which was dominated and illuminated some twenty years before by Grande-

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ville. Moreover, Grandeville's "Metamorphoses du Jour" and his "La Vie Privée et Publique des Animaux," in which he depicted every animal and insect under the sun in every possible human and inhuman posture—including most of the later Alice in Wonderland postures—were extremely well known in England as well as on the Continent. In short, what we have been accustomed to bless Tenniel for seems to derive largely from a better artist and a greater man, and whether Tenniel should or should not have admitted as much is a knotty problem with which, when not engaged in weightier matters, lovers of Alice might concern themselves.

* * * * *

FOR the truth is that the Drifter, duly impressed by Mlle Mespoulet's discovery, nevertheless turned back to the conversation between Alice and the caterpillar with complete absorption. And he will say further that if Mlle Mespoulet's book were written in a less stuffy style than it is, and if Grandeville were a greater artist even than the records show him to be, and if it were discovered that far from inventing "Alice" himself, the Reverend Mr. Dodgson really copied it out of one of the tales composed by Francis Bacon when he had finished with Shakespeare—in the face of all these contingencies the Drifter would still be absorbed in "Alice" every time he opened its familiar pages. There is a unity, a uniqueness, a completeness about it—of which Tenniel's illustrations form a very important part—which no addition to the knowledge of its genesis, however well-intentioned, can break in upon. Undoubtedly Mlle Mespoulet was aware of this, and her book is a pleasant antiquarian excursion into French art in the first half of the nineteenth century. But it has almost nothing to do with Alice. That young lady will serenely continue her walks in and out of the looking glass, and as usual she will be followed by a large and admiring multitude.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Some Statistics for Mr. Mencken

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I am sure that *The Nation,* having given the repealists such publicity, will allow the opposition a little space in which to reply to Mr. Mencken's article. Mr. Mencken asserts that under repeal the demand for liquor has "settled down" to something "very moderate."

If by the above statement Mr. Mencken means that liquor consumption under repeal is "very moderate," the question at once arises, Why have arrests for drunkenness and automobile accidents attributed to liquor shown such horrifying increases? For example, according to figures of Prohibition Facts Service, arrests for drunkenness increased in the three months following repeal, in New York, 55 per cent; in Los Angeles, 95 per cent; in Denver, over 50 per cent. As for liquor and motor traffic, in Detroit automobile accidents attributed to drink show an increase of 164 per cent (release of June 26), while in Chicago injuries and deaths involving drunken drivers show a 300 per cent increase (first half of 1934 compared with first half 1933. See *Union Signal,* August 4).

The time has come to face facts. The arguments used to relegalize liquor are now being used to legalize lotteries, gambling, and red-light districts. They are the same arguments that were used to bring about the Unwholesome America that followed the Civil War—lotteries, drink, betting on horse and other races, gambling, red-light districts. Slowly, as the nation got rested after the Civil War, it cleaned house, went for a Wholesome America: twenty states and territories adopted constitutional amendments against lotteries, five against race-track gambling, Louisiana against all gambling (lottery there abolished in 1890). Concurrent with the anti-lottery movement, 117 tracks where there was betting on races were closed in the thirty-eight years before 1927 (in thirty-one States). I have no history of the closing of the red-light districts, but we all know how they slowly disappeared in the Character Comeback that finally followed the Character Collapse of the post-Civil War period.

Now in the exhaustion period following the World War, the wet mentality arises, leads the way, and the rest follows; and back we go fifty years at least. But it won't last. Why? Because the newcomers who are taking possession of our government, the so-called foreign-language groups, will now see their homes despoiled; the small tradesmen will see their profits taken by the saloon, the races, lotteries perhaps, and red-light districts. Out of suffering the masses will separate into two political camps, those who see politics as loot and drink, and those who see it as a means of building up a decent world for their children. I say this advisedly, for I know personally leaders of the foreign groups in my own state. They are just as much for Wholesome America as I am.

Out of the city sidewalks will come Savonarolas who know that a government cannot be merely a Santa Claus but must found itself on character and hard work rather than on drink and get-something-for-nothing. Now mark well! The writer is a liberal, eager to see a more abundant life for all. But no government scheme can work, be it modified capitalism, socialism, or what not, unless it has behind it citizens of sterling character, strong for self-discipline, thrift, and self-sacrifice, and clear-headed enough to know that you can and must both educate and legislate morality into mankind.

We are not wise in falling for arguments that bluff about the present post-war character collapse. Rather face it and hold fast the memory of Wholesome America till we bring it back. This should be the special task of women's clubs and parent-teacher associations.

Cambridge, Mass., December 16 ELIZABETH TILTON

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I was really quite surprised to read a featured article in *The Nation* on the prohibition question which took into account not at all the one statistical barometer now available, namely, the reports from men in charge of State highway departments. Anyone who reads the daily papers has had a chance to see several of these. They indicate in the last year an alarming increase of accidents to automobilists and pedestrians alike, in some cases 50 per cent, as a result of alcohol. Should anyone want to refresh his mind on these facts, he will find them well marshaled in an article in the *Christian Century* of about a month ago written by John Haynes Holmes.

Your own article by Mr. Menchen [sic] is so far from convincing that it might almost be placed alongside the wish philosophy from which Mr. Menchen in past years has done so much to liberate his generation.

EGBERT CHALMER MACKLIN,
Pastor, Victoria Congregational Church

Jamaica, N. Y., December 10

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I was disappointed in Mr. Mencken's A Year of Legal Liquor. He writes like a man sitting in an easy chair far from realities. It is true that the orgy of drunkenness forecast by

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some dry fanatics has not materialized. It is a fact, however, that in almost every respect the prophecies of the advocates of repeal have proved inaccurate. Bootlegging still flourishes, crime has not abated a whit, drunkenness has notably increased, and despite all solemn promises, the saloon in effect is with us again. To be complacent, as Mr. Mencken is, under these circumstances, exhibits a detachment of mind which must be very convenient to a man who is on record as expecting so much from the repeal of prohibition.

LAWRENCE G. BROOKS, Special Justice,
First District Court of Eastern Middlesex

Malden, Mass., December 11

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

This fellow Mencken makes me tired. Some months ago there was a picture of him in the *Saturday Review of Literature* that hit him off just right. He was shown standing with a friend gazing with rapt awe at the picture of a brewery! If there ever was a half-intoxicated individual in the world, inebriated with the spirit of his own verbosity, it is Mencken.

Take that article of his, One Year of Legal Liquor, which you foolishly printed: the first paragraph could have been written only by someone absolutely blind to the facts of the case. Take the record of all the great cities—from Portland, Oregon, and Los Angeles to Boston and Hartford—and you find that the increase in drinking is tremendous. Take the little village in which I live—and thousands like it; and the increase of drunkenness is appalling.

Last summer I traveled 8,000 miles across the country and back and saw dozens and dozens of towns and cities, and my own observation confirms the facts as given. Surely *The Nation,* at any rate, ought to be on the side of sobriety, for God knows we need sober reasoning in these days that are upon us.

Pittsfield, N. H., December 8 HARRY TAYLOR,
Minister, First Congregational Church

Japanese War Expenditures

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

An editorial in *The Nation* for December 5 says that the Japanese Diet approved "a record appropriation for the army and navy of over a billion yen, or 46 per cent of the annual budget." This common misstatement comes from the peculiarly complicated nature of our budgetary system, difficult for laymen to understand.

The Japanese budget is divided into General Account and Special Account, not a few appropriations appearing under both. Therefore, to figure out the percentage of military appropriations, we must first add up the appropriations in both the General and Special accounts, and then subtract from the total the items which overlap each other in the two accounts. The 1934-35 budget consists of a General Account of 2,143,000,000 yen and a Special Account of 6,883,000,000 yen, or a total of 9,026,000,000 yen. Deduct from this amount overlapping items totaling 2,368,000,000 yen, and the net estimated expenditure is 6,658,000,000 yen, of which the army's share is 449,000,000, or 6.74 per cent, and the navy's share 487,000,000 yen, or 7.31 per cent. The combined percentage of the army and the navy is 14.05, which shows a considerable reduction as compared with 17.32 for 1933-34.

In 1933-34 America's military and naval appropriations amounted to 17.51 per cent, England's 15.62, France's 23.36, and Italy's 20.88.

Washington, December 11 CAPTAIN T. YAMAGUCHI,
Japanese Naval Attache

[While it is true that the budgets of various countries are never exactly comparable, there would appear to be no basis for Captain Yamaguchi's claim that the Special Account should be taken into consideration in determining the proportion of Japan's budget which is devoted to war preparation. The Special Account compares roughly with the emergency and recovery expenditures of the United States and contains nothing, except possibly the sinking fund, which would be included in the regular budget of any country. We find, for example, the following to be among the larger of the thirty-four items listed under the Special Account: Government Railways, Rice Control, Post Office Life Insurance, Receipts on Public Loans, Iron Works, and the Governments of Chosen and Taiwan. In fact, the only items in the Special Account which appear to belong in the regular budget are of a military nature, including appropriations for an army arsenal, a naval arsenal, a naval fuel office, and a naval powder mill.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Not Crackpot but a Menace

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The heading placed by *The Nation* over my letter in the issue of December 19, in which I indicated how the proposed new party would be made up of elements already showing fascist tendencies, is ambiguous, and does not reflect what I wrote. The heading could mean that I consider the idea of such a party "crackpot." I certainly do not. I consider it a menace of the most serious kind, as my letter indicated.

I said that the new party would be "recruited from liberal or left-wing elements of both the Democratic and the Republican Party, from right-wing Socialists, from Technocrats, Sinclairites, Utopians, Social Creditites, Farmer Laborites, supplemented by a general assortment of adherents to a variety of crackpot and social theories." I do not agree with the Democratic or the Republican Party, but in justice to my intelligence you should not suggest that I believe them "crackpot."

Such a heading lays *The Nation* open to the—I hope—unjust suspicion that it is so favorable to the proposed party that it seeks to ridicule any disparaging of such an enterprise.

New York, December 20 MAXWELL HYDE

Three Pishes for the Drifter and Hurrah for Dr. Townsend!

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In *The Nation* for November 14 the Drifter wrote an article about the Townsend Old-age Pension Plan, and I wish to say that whoever the Drifter may be he should be sure he knows what he is talking about before he has his articles published in a magazine that the gullible public are paying their good money to read.

In this article it is asserted that under the Townsend Plan any woman or man over sixty accepting the pension of $200 a month must renounce any private income he or she might have. This statement is untrue. The people back of this Townsend Plan have explained over and over through the newspapers, by articles in magazines, and over the radio that it is not the intention of the Townsend Plan to take away any of the accumulated wealth or possessions of anyone, especially of those who agree to come under the provisions of the Townsend Plan. And I say "pish" to the Drifter for making a statement apparently intended to mislead the public.

The Drifter also says he could not spend as much as $200

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a month. Couldn't he buy diamond necklaces for his dog, as some of the millionaires have done, while people less fortunate have not had the money to buy shoes for their children? Perhaps, though, the Drifter would call shoes and food for the laboring people "gewgaws."

"Pish" again to the Drifter for his reference to Chaucer, Milton, Jane Austen, and the rest. In their day people were old at sixty years. In our day "life begins at sixty."

Haugan, Mont., December 13 E. COLEMAN

Our Public Schools

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I read the article by John K. Norton on Educational Finance in *The Nation* of December 5 and am in complete sympathy with the views expressed therein; yet there is a further question to be raised about the returns that are realized for the tax dollars spent on the present school system. I am a product of the public-school system, have taught in the high school, and have sent four children through the public schools. I am not unappreciative of what the public schools have done for America and of the devoted work of many of our teachers, but it seems to me that the time has come for a very marked change from the old system and an adaptation of it to the needs of modern life. The educators themselves are groping for a new and better plan of popular education, but I wish some standard periodical like *The Nation* would lead in a study of this vital problem. To a large extent our present school system develops a parasitic psychology. If children were taught to share in the work of the world and to render public service, this would be changed.

I agree that the nation ought to maintain the schools, but it is also entitled to a different product from what it is getting.

Kellogg, Minn., December 6 ROBERT H. DUEL

A Ray of Light from Germany

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

May I through your correspondence columns call attention to the underground movement in Germany? These illegal activities are more difficult and dangerous than they were in czarist Russia or are in fascist Italy; nevertheless they go on. Prague is the center of the struggle against Hitler. The most important weapon is the printed word, in flysheet, newspaper, or pamphlet. It is impossible to satisfy the demand for it. Even within Germany production goes forward. Most of those engaged in illegal activities are unemployed. There is a perpetual lack of money. There is lack of printing presses, typewriters, duplicating machines. Funds are scraped together penny by penny. The most illegal publication is the *Socialist Action,* an eight-page newspaper published every fortnight. A single copy weighs barely an eighth of an ounce. During its first year two million copies were distributed.

The titles of the pamphlets are interesting. "Plato's Feast" and "Do You Take Care of Your Hair?" are miniature editions of the *Socialist Review.* The paralyzing spell that first lay on the masses of the population has disappeared. A wave of discontent is spreading. Slowly but unflinchingly those opposed to Hitler are pushing ahead with their work of sapping and undermining, like moles, the walls of the Third Reich. They are fighting to bring back the civilized Germany that was.

Chicago, December 11 JAMES M. YARD

Next Week
Huey Long
by Raymond Gram Swing
and
An Article on the Power Fight
by Frank P. Walsh, Chairman of the
New York State Power Authority

Jacques Romain

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Jacques Romain, poet and novelist of color, and the finest living Haitian writer, has just been sentenced at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to two years in jail for circulating there a French magazine of Negro liberation called the *Cri des Nègres.* Jacques Romain is a young man of excellent European education, formerly occupying a high post in the Haitian government and greatly respected by intellectuals as an outstanding man of letters. He is one of the very few upper-class Haitians who understand and sympathize with the plight of the oppressed peasants of the island, and who have attempted to write about and to remedy the pitiful conditions of 90 per cent of the Haitian people, exploited by the big coffee monopolies and the manipulations of foreign finance in the hands of the National City Bank.

As a fellow-writer of color, I call upon all writers and artists of whatever race who believe in the freedom of words and of the human spirit, immediately to protest to the President of Haiti and to the nearest Haitian consulate against the uncalled for, unmerited sentence to prison of Jacques Romain.

Carmel, Cal., December 1 LANGSTON HUGHES

George Herbert Palmer

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The undersigned will be very grateful for any interesting data—letters, notes of lectures, personal reminiscences—concerning the late Professor George Herbert Palmer of Harvard University. All material received at 465 West Twenty-third Street, will be safely returned to the owner.

New York, December 10 FRANCES LEE PANCHAUD

Contributors to This Issue

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Labor and Industry

The Steel Barons "Mediate"

By ROSE M. STEIN

Pittsburgh, December 14

EARLY in last June, just as the National Industrial Recovery Act was nearing its first birthday, the Administration in Washington and the country generally were considerably disturbed by the serious threat of a nation-wide steel strike. As the result, however, of a series of maneuvers initiated by the federal government, carried out by the more conservative union leaders, and not too vigorously fought by the rank and file, plans for an immediate strike were abandoned. This was done on the explicit understanding that the government would set up competent and authoritative mediation machinery to adjust labor difficulties in the steel industry. Such machinery was set up some six months ago, and it is not too soon to take stock of its accomplishment, for what happens in steel is both a barometer of conditions in other major industries and the force that regulates the barometer.

Public Resolution No. 44, passed during the closing hours of the Seventy-third Congress, together with President Roosevelt's executive order issued June 29, created the National Steel Labor Relations Board and outlined its specific duties and powers. It was made clear that the board had full authority to investigate employees' complaints, to mediate differences, and, if necessary, to order and supervise employees' elections. Judge Walter P. Stacy was made chairman of the board; Dr. James Mullenbach and Rear Admiral Henry A. Wiley were the other two members. No one who has had a chance to work with this board or who has observed the board in action can possibly question the competence or sincerity of its members. In fact, the board was so competent that there could not be found another one like it. When the textile situation became particularly acute last summer and a mediation body was sought, the same three men were asked to serve as the Textile Labor Relations Board. Automobile workers, disheartened with their own mediation board, have in a number of instances asked the Administration for permission to present their problems before the Steel Labor Relations Board. If the facts indicate failure on the part of the Steel Board to achieve the purpose it was created for, such failure must be charged not to the board's personnel but to the basic principle that mediation is inevitably doomed to failure when one of the parties concerned is so powerful that it can defy both the other contestant and the mediator.

At the outset the board reduced the problem to a simple formula. It said to employers in effect:

> Under Section 7-a workers have a right to choose whom they please to represent them in collective bargaining with their employers. You, employers, may have a moral interest in the type of organization your employees choose, but you have no legal interest in it. You have no right to interfere with their choice. Your very presence here is only a matter of courtesy on our part. If you say that you are not certain which organization represents the workers in your plant, then we shall be glad to set up the machinery to determine that fact for you.

The three small companies involved in the board's first public hearings, held in Pittsburgh from August 14 to 16, were nonplussed by so frank and simple a statement of the issue. They could find no ready basis for opposing it. One of the participants, the Apollo Steel Company, discovered, literally overnight, by means of a "careful check-up" that the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers really represented a majority in its plant, and since it conceded the fact, there was no need for an election. Another of the companies promised to negotiate with union representatives. The third and smallest of the three threatened court action but finally agreed to an election, which the union carried by a substantial majority.

While some newspapers hailed the outcome of these initial hearings as a victory for mediation, the general consensus of opinion was that the real test would come only when petitions were heard against the larger steel companies, especially the United States Steel Corporation. This encounter took place, also in Pittsburgh, on October 3.

It was an impressive show. The small third-floor courtroom in Pittsburgh's Old Post Office building was jammed to the doors. The crowd consisted mainly of steel workers. What a variety of faces! Here was a real league of nations; broad-cheeked Slavs, Poles, and Croatians; deep-eyed Hungarians; Italians, Swedes, Americans; all absorbed and somewhat bewildered, all eager to testify yet struck with fright when finally called to the witness stand. This was their show but they did not quite understand it. During recess one could hear them say, "Why they talk so much company union, company union? Everybody knows company union no good." In the mill there is no such make-believe. A worker may be forced at the end of a riot stick to vote for company-union representatives, but such action is frankly interpreted as an exercise of employer's authority. Here they talked of a company union as though it existed of itself. Every man in his senses knew that was not true.

"If it please the board, we will present the case of Fort Dukane Lodge No. 187, Duquesne Works, Carnegie Steel Company, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation." It was Charlton Ogburn speaking, attorney for the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers. Mr. Ogburn presents these cases simply and undramatically, but with a kind of dogged persistence. The issue, after all, is perfectly simple, and very much the same in every instance. In accordance with the right granted them by Section 7-a, workers of Duquesne's steel mill have joined the Amalgamated. They claim to represent a majority of the 4,200 workers in the plant, and since the management appears to question this claim, they ask a government-supervised election. It is within the board's jurisdiction to grant such an election. The petitioners endeavored to prove that there existed a spirit of unrest which could be allayed only by an election. There was one Negro among the witnesses, Williamson by name. He works in the Duquesne plant and preaches on the side, but

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out of both jobs he "ain't been able to buy no decent pair of shoes them last four years."

"Do you know of any unrest among the workers in Duquesne?" he was asked. "Do I know of any unrest?" Williamson repeated the question in a rising crescendo. "Yes, sir, I knows they's unrest, 'cause some o' that unrest's in me."

The defendant was represented by three attorneys. But who was the defendant? The steel company, of course. Everyone knew that. Some of the corporation's "big shots" were present, among them Arthur H. Young, director of industrial relations and reputed to be the author of the company-union plan. On the witness stand Mr. Young admitted that his plan was not a union or even an organization, but "a contact scheme." One of the attorneys explained how this "contact scheme" fulfils the requirements of collective bargaining. With the aid of a new Standard Dictionary he defined bargaining as an *endeavor* to make a bargain. The definition, he pointed out, says nothing about the right to *impose* or *exact* a bargain. It merely says endeavor. Bargaining, then, is a contact of minds. That contact takes place when workers and management meet, whether or not a bargain ensues. Yes, it was perfectly clear that the employer was the defendant. But back in August the Steel Board had indicated that employers had no legal status at these hearings. A legal fiction was therefore obligingly adhered to; that is, legally, the United States Steel Corporation was merely an interested observer. The real defendants were representatives of the company union. Thus proceeded the farce in which industry engaged one-half of the working class to beat down the other half.

Workers were called to testify for both sides. Union men recited a long tale of unrest, of coercion and discrimination. "Boss's friend gets five days' work a week, union man get maybe one day or two." On the election day everyone was asked to vote for the company union. It was more than a mere request, it was a complete check-up. "Boss, he come around with pencil and paper. If you vote, he put your name and check number on one side. If you no vote, he put your name on other side, then it's too bad for you."

On the company's side workers cheerfully responded to their attorneys' leading questions. The company union was painted as a paradise in disguise. Under cross-examination, however, it was brought out that most of the company-union representatives had no idea of the real meaning of the plan's provisions. They had no notion of where their authority to bargain for the workers came from or of how to enforce such authority if they had it. The company admittedly pays all expenses, including the time representatives spend in bargaining with the management, and the expense of a full time secretary as well. The company, it was brought out, was paying for the attorneys and witnesses involved in this proceeding. Anyone could detect the insincerity of company witnesses. Why did they thus prostitute themselves? The answer was not hard to find. With but one exception, every worker who testified for the company had put in twenty-five years or more of service with the company. One man testified of having worked for the Carnegie Steel Company since 1884. They are too old to run the risk of having to seek new jobs, and many of them are desperately clutching the hope of getting a pension sometime soon.

The case of the Carnegie Steel Company plant at McDonald, Ohio, differs somewhat from the usual case. Here workers in February, 1934, defeated the company-union plan by a vote of 714 to 627. Despite this fact, company-union representatives were put up for election on June 15, and when it was found that an insufficient number of votes had been cast, the polls were kept open for another twenty-four hours, the ballots having been in the meantime stored in the company's vault.

A number of hearings have been held since October 3. These involved, among others, the Jones and Laughlin Corporation, the Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and the Wheeling, Illinois, and Acme Steel corporations. In every instance the evidence was overwhelmingly in favor of the workers. In every instance glaring violations of Section 7-a were testified to. In every instance the companies tried to bring counter-testimony to prove coercion on the part of the union. Long hours were consumed in this counter-testimony, which on the face of it had no meaning. Even if coercion on the part of the union could be proved, it would still be beside the point. Section 7-a forbids coercion on the part of employers, not employees. If some workers try to persuade other workers to join a given organization, they are within their legal right if the means of persuasion are peaceful; they are subject to criminal prosecution if the means are violent. In neither case is coercion, as defined in the labor clause, involved. Employers could charge workers with coercion and interference only in the event that such workers endeavored to keep individual steel corporations from joining the Iron and Steel Institute or the National Manufacturers' Association. No such charges have as yet been brought forward.

The steel industry is taking none of these hearings seriously. The Carnegie Steel Company and some of the lesser satellites in steel have recently summarized their position in these words: they would "negotiate with members of any employees' organization as representatives of those employees which they represent." True, these words convey little meaning, but the very effort to becloud the issue is indicative of the employers' determination not to recognize any bona fide union. Even where Amalgamated lodges have by vote or company concession been recognized as representing a majority, no contract or working agreement has so far ensued. As a matter of fact, the companies have been quite frank in this respect. Both on and off the witness stand they have repeatedly stated they would recognize no union. For, they point out, this would lead to the worst of all bugaboos, the closed shop. The closed shop, they hasten to add, is specifically forbidden by Section 7-a. And of course the steel industry would do nothing that is forbidden by law. At the Weirton trial in Wilmington the same motif was emphasized; union recognition means the closed shop, and the closed shop is forbidden by the Recovery Act.

While seeking refuge in the Recovery Act, steel companies openly profess little confidence in or respect for that law. Every Steel Board hearing held so far has been opened by a uniform prologue, somewhat on this order:

> We deny the jurisdiction and authority of this board on the grounds: (1) that the NIRA and Congressional Resolution No. 44 creating the board are unconstitutional; (2) that the board has no authority to investigate controversies arising between employers and employees for the reason that they do not affect interstate commerce; (3) that the President's executive order conferring jurisdiction is not authorized by the Recovery Act.

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In effect, then, the companies, even though they take part in the hearings, are merely playing at cooperation. They show not the remotest intention of abiding by the board's decisions, unless of course such decisions should happen to be in their favor. Otherwise they will drag the case to the courts and bury it there for as long as possible. For the present, the hearings offer an effective means of playing for time. William Green also wants time. When he appeared before the reconvened steel workers' convention in Pittsburgh, on June 15, to plead for the acceptance of a mediation plan in place of a strike, he emphasized that by this means the workers would not only have their immediate grievances promptly adjusted but would gain time in which to achieve other essential objectives, among them the mobilization of public opinion and the building of a strong union organization. How has each side utilized these six months?

Employers have used these last six months to allow more work to non-union than to union men. On the least provocation, heretofore generally overlooked, union men have been fired or laid off. The employers have perfected their spy system and increased their threats of dismissal. They have in many instances, through the control of local relief administrators, interfered with relief grants, and have made the most of personal slander against union leaders. At the same time they have organized baseball teams, built swimming pools, and held parties. What has the union done to counteract these efforts? Practically nothing. Save in a few new localities, there has not been an Amalgamated organizer in the field for about a year.

The inevitable question arises: What will all this lead to? The Steel Board may or may not order elections in the larger plants—United States Steel, Jones and Laughlin, and Weirton. If such elections are ordered, and if the usual temper of these companies prevails—and nothing short of a miracle could change it—the orders will be defied. Even if elections are held and the union wins by overwhelming majorities, the steel industry will not accept the union as a bargaining agency without a bitter fight. Sooner or later, then, the testimony so patiently gathered by the Steel Board will be absorbing the interest of nine Supreme Court judges. This might not be necessary if a law were forced through the next Congress interpreting union-organization efforts as coercion and making coercion generally illegal. The National Manufacturers' Association, at its recent convention, went on record as advocating a revised labor plank that would "guarantee employees the right to deal with employers either individually or collectively or through representatives of their own choice without intimidation or coercion of *either party* from any source."

Most of the rank-and-file leaders have not lost heart. William Spang, president of the Pittsburgh district, says: "If we held an election in Duquesne tomorrow we would walk away with it. If they don't grant us an election, then we'll have to prove our strength in the only other way open to us." William J. Long, president of the Weirton lodge, says: "Not many in our lodge pay dues and not many come to our meetings. Why should they when everything is at a standstill? Give us an election and we'll go over the top. If we don't get an election, just wait until next April." Ed Leighty, president of the Alton, Illinois, lodge, says: "The rank-and-file feeling is one of bewilderment. But many of us are stringing along in case something does happen." And Cecil E. Allen, president of the Indianapolis district, says: "If the steel corporations think the workers won't organize and strike for better conditions, they are foolish."

If the spring months bring any sizable increase in production, a renewed wave of strike sentiment among steel workers, as among other classes of workers, is almost inevitable. However, unless the union makes adequate preparation for such an eventuality, either the strike plans will again be squelched by government interference or the strike, if as now seems likely one is declared, will be unorganized and sporadic, and will almost certainly prove futile against the combined forces of the Steel Institute and business interests generally. The Amalgamated and the American Federation of Labor have at least three months in which to make preparations. Much can be done in that time. Will they rise to this opportunity?

Steadier Jobs in Automobiles

THE sensational hearings in Detroit on wages in the automobile industry were part of an investigation ordered by the President with a view to making jobs in that industry less seasonal. He promised such a study as a gesture to labor when he extended the automobile code without change to February 1, 1935. Since the industry has recently inaugurated its own plan for regularization, it can meet any government proposals by saying that this plan must be given a fair trial. For years new models have been shown in January and produced mainly in February, March, and April. After that workers are laid off in great numbers. The industry's new plan provides that some new models be announced in December, some in January, and some higher-priced ones in June. The main production period would then be spread through December and January and through the summer months, which are usually the slackest.

It is doubtful whether the manufacturers will undertake another obvious way of regularization, namely, offer preseason low prices, although they did cut prices after the season this year. Nor is the prospect of unemployment-insurance legislation likely to influence them. They will certainly not encourage the passage of such legislation in Michigan and other states, and if a federal law is passed, it is unlikely to tax companies or industries according to the rate at which they lay off workers, or, if it does, to levy a tax big enough to stimulate further regularization.

Finally, there seems little immediate chance that the industry as a whole will follow Ford in dropping the policy of claiming radical yearly improvements in the hope of getting a rush of orders early in the year. The annual new model used to be justified when substantial improvements were being discovered. At present it is mostly ballyhoo. If the industry gave it up and introduced changes only when mechanical progress really justified it, orders and manufacture would tend to level off. To be sure, such a policy would remove style as a motive for buying and might cut down sales, but it would mean a substantial saving in other directions. It would decrease the enormous number of second-hand cars which compete with the new; tools would not have to be replaced every year; and the industry could produce as much as it does today with a smaller investment in equipment, which must now be maintained at the level necessary for peak production.

[Not Fit to Print, an article on the Newspaper Guild's fight for union recognition, which was announced for this issue, will appear next week.]

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Books, Drama, Films

Mr. Pope

The Early Career of Alexander Pope. By George Sherburn. Oxford University Press. $5.

ALEXANDER POPE suffered an odd fate: his works were issued in a monumental edition prepared by men who neither admired his writing nor respected his character. That edition, somewhat revised, is still today the standard one, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the attitude it takes has largely influenced nearly every estimate of his personality as well as the orthodox opinion of his literary rank. Mr. Sherburn now points out that Pope had been unfortunate from the very beginning in the men who elected to write about him, and he proposes to reexamine the years before the publication of "The Dunciad" in order to set the earlier career of its author in a truer light.

Not long ago Edith Sitwell undertook something of the sort, but she proceeded in an entirely different manner. Her book was the book of an enthusiastic amateur, interesting largely because of its crotchets and prejudice; Mr. Sherburn, on the other hand, is a research scholar who has devoted himself with tireless patience to picking the knots of a tangled web. He frankly disclaims any attempt at either literary criticism or biography in the usual sense, and his book can have little appeal to the general reader. His concern is with documents and old newspapers, with forgotten pamphlets, obscure allusions, and dates of publication. But no future historian of Augustan literature can afford to do other than consult it on numberless occasions. Here are hundreds of specific and relevant facts which only boundless patience could gather and arrange.

Mr. Sherburn would be the last to claim that he has whitewashed his subject, but he does make it clear that students have shown an odd disposition to forget the testimony of Pope's friends while listening to that of his enemies; and it is perfectly true that a hundred persons have heard that Pope "could not take tea without stratagem" to one who knows that Spence, a modest man with no ax to grind, set down in a manuscript the opinion: "All the people well acquainted with Mr. Pope looked on him as a most friendly, open, charitable, and generous-hearted man."

Now there is, to be sure, no reason for accepting such a statement as that without qualification. Pope was certainly capable not only of the most venomous spite and of hardly dignified intrigue but also of a childishly brutal revenge, like that which he took when he administered a purge to the disreputable publisher Curll. But Mr. Sherburn does make it clear that the quarrels were less often of Pope's making than we commonly suppose, and that Grubb Street had asked repeatedly for what it finally got. He might, to be sure, have treated his enemies as too far below him for notice, and he might, when he did reply, have chosen a higher ground instead of consenting to fight the battle out on their level of insinuation and vituperation. But at least he was no more coarse and no more brutal than his enemies, and the modern reader who winces when he hears Pope mock his opponents for their want of bread may take what comfort he can from the reflection that these honest poor had begun by twitting Pope with his crooked back.

There is also a consideration which, being aesthetic, is outside the province of Mr. Sherburn's book: Pope did, indeed, transform the manner if not the matter of the controversy and raised sneering to the level of art. To accuse a critic of being poor is not a pretty procedure, and neither is it exactly gentlemanly to suggest that a lady who has rejected your advances suffers from venereal disease. As a moralist I reprobate both actions; but I confess that I find it hard to remember that Dennis was a real man or Lady Mary a real woman when I read the two familiar couplets:

> Yet then did Dennis rage in furious fret;
> I never answer'd; I was not in debt.

and

> From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
> Pox'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate.

Whatever pain these lines may have caused disappeared two centuries ago. So, too, did the human and unlovely malice which inspired them. But something in them that *is* lovely—skill, gusto, and sheer felicity of utterance—remains. And beauty of even that unholy sort is a joy forever.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

A Handbook of Injustice

Human Exploitation. By Norman Thomas. Frederick A. Stokes Company. $2.75.

WHATEVER complacency still exists in the mind of the average American after the experiences of the past five years will be rudely shocked by the reading of Norman Thomas's latest book. Unlike his earlier works this volume contains little of his personal convictions or of Socialist theory. It is far more provocative than that. Possibly it might best be described as a social case study of American civilization or as a handbook of economic and social justice. It is written in Mr. Thomas's inimitably pungent style, and while not as comprehensive as a yearbook of statistics or as emotionally powerful as a great social novel, it combines many of the best features of each.

The picture which it presents is far from a pleasant one. The author begins by describing the toll of landlordism in this country, the incredible housing conditions in the slums and in rural districts. He cites authority to the effect that half the homes in the United States fail to measure up to the minimum standard of decent housing. In 1930, for example, only 15.8 per cent of all farm dwellings had running water, and only 13.4 per cent were able to utilize electricity for lighting purposes, while in certain sections of the South from 85 to 90 per cent of the houses lacked any sanitary conveniences whatever. In contrast to this, he describes the unseemly wealth of certain families whose only claim to distinction is that certain of their ancestors invested in real estate in what was later to become the heart of a great city.

Even more depressing is the chapter entitled Farming for Exercise, which portrays the plight of the million and a half share-croppers in the South. The average income of a share-cropper family in Arkansas, where Mr. Thomas has made a special study of the situation, is said to be less than $210 a year, and even this has been taken away from many by the dislocation resulting from the AAA crop-restriction program. The position of the migratory workers in agriculture is even worse in certain sections. For many of these, men, women, and children, the only home that they possess is the automobile in which they travel from place to place looking for an opportunity to work at starvation wages. Strikes and attempts at labor organization are ruthlessly suppressed, even in the more progressive portions of the country.

Conditions in the lumber camps of the Northwest are but slightly better. Hourly wages run from twenty-three to forty cents for a forty-hour week under the NRA, but out of this come exorbitant deductions for food, laundry, and other expenses. Even this wage is intermittent, for the working periods

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are interspersed with long intervals of unemployment. Exploitation is also flagrant in the mining industry. Wages are so low as to keep a large proportion of the miners constantly in debt to the company, virtually in a state of peonage; the housing conditions may be judged from the fact that the United States Coal Commission found only 2 of 713 typical mining villages which met the most modest requirements as to water supply and sewage disposal.

The standard of living of wage-earners in all fields of industry is shown to be far from reasonably satisfactory, even in years of so-called prosperity. Average incomes for manual workers in 1926 varied from $1,100 to $1,160 a year, while the estimates of the minimum cost of a health-and-decency standard of living for a family of five ranged from $1,900 to $2,500. Moreover, since the onset of the depression labor has suffered a greater than proportionate decline in income, in addition to bearing the brunt of the unemployment and general insecurity of the period. Add to this the social cost of the exploitation of women, children, and the Negro, and the indictment of our existing social order is overwhelming.

If one can make a criticism of such a valuable book, it is that Mr. Thomas has not interpreted his material so as to convince the average reader of the cause of the shocking conditions he describes. A detailed analysis of the operation of the capitalist system is of course beyond the scope of a volume of this type. Nevertheless, the indictment of present-day society which the author presents would be immeasurably stronger if he had taken more pains to integrate his material. Despite this weakness, which some critics would doubtless consider a virtue, the book is incomparably the best in its field, one which every socially-minded individual will wish to possess for reference purposes.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

The Pursuit of Glory

The Glory Hunter. A Life of General Custer. By Frederic F. Van de Water. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $3.75.

THIS is an important book, not so much because of its literary quality, which could easily be improved, as because of the author's obvious devotion to the truth. It was time for a judicially fair review of Custer's life, especially in view of the growing tendency to make a hero of an officer who sacrificed the lives of half his regiment by throwing all military caution and principles to the winds. His own death he fully deserved, as everyone who reads Mr. Van de Water's review of his military career—which included the killing in cold blood of Confederate prisoners in the Shenandoah—will agree. If some of the facts in it were carved on the shaft at the Custer battlefield—now visited by thousands of tourists every year—there would be a widespread feeling that especial distinction was hardly merited by the "hero" of the Little Big Horn.

Luck and fortune favored Custer far beyond his desserts. They gave him a wife wonderful in her blind devotion to him, who lived for more than fifty years after his death to sing his praises through her readable, if sentimental, books. She largely created the Custer myth, portraying him as a glorious, noble-hearted knight who lived only to do good deeds. As a matter of fact, Custer, who had been the sloppiest of cadets at West Point, graduating at the very bottom of his class, became a merciless martinet, drilling and driving his men until they hated him—except for his superb bravery; he always charged at the head of his troops. Twice they mutinied against him. He was absolutely ruthless and cold-blooded, as at the massacre of a village of unsuspecting Cheyenne men, women, and children on the Washita in 1867. At that time he refused to go to the aid of his major and nineteen men, who were surrounded by other Indians and killed after their ammunition was gone, with Custer and the regiment within hearing distance.

Custer was court-martialed once and suspended from duty for deserting his troops and ordering deserters murdered; on the charge of murder he was nearly tried. General David S. Stanley wrote of Custer when the latter was serving under him that he was "a cold-blooded, untruthful, unprincipled man." He was also a braggart, whose self-glorification was notorious; he was a poseur, who fought with a war correspondent to make him write about him. He was reckless in statement and act, but cringed and came to heel if called down by a superior. He had the friendship of General Sheridan, who kept him and others in the army when they should have been dismissed, and shared in his guilt in Indian matters, as did Sherman also, as Mr. Van de Water shows.

Indeed, one of the best parts of Mr. Van de Water's book is its fearless setting forth of the shameful and dishonorable treatment of the Indians throughout the period from 1865 to 1876, especially those events leading up to the campaign of 1876, when the Sioux were lied to, deceived, given lands only to be robbed of them, and generally outraged and exploited. A terrible chapter in American history! Mr. Van de Water has described the final Custer battle more clearly than any other writer, and with genuine dramatic power. All the way through he scrupulously tries to be fair, and he portrays well the love match of the Custers, one of the most remarkable cases of married devotion on record. Like Custer's courage under fire, it is a beautiful page in an otherwise brutal and bloody and repellent story. It is a pity that Mr. Van de Water did not supplement his narrative by adding historical data—a verified list of the dead at the Little Big Horn with brief sketches of the officers killed, of troopers who fell under Custer, of Reno and Benteen. Perhaps he will add this information in later editions, in which some of the repeated references to Custer's search for glory and the Greek fate which overtook him could be eliminated. This is a book which ought to be in all libraries since it is the only authentic life of Custer and the only true account available of the relations of the army to the Indian.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

A College Poet

Avalanche of April. By Kimball Flaccus. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

OUR colleges must be somewhat to blame for such poets as Kimball Flaccus. They have discovered the American tradition late but with enthusiasm, and are sending forth capable and very literary poets one and all imbued with the idea that America is a great country, that the American pioneer spirit can never die. Our young poets go, moreover, to such colleges as Dartmouth, Mr. Flaccus's Alma Mater—exclusive country colleges. For them, therefore, New York, even as Babylon, "is built of straw and fire-baked clay"; for them an adolescent American idealism endures.

Our earlier modern poets were not so handicapped. Many of them got their America at first hand, not through books. Now, of course, we are done with exploration, and folk poetry and specimens of native literature seldom appear. Our present poets are bound to be scholars of literature; but why need they be so self-consciously traditional? Modern young English poets are steeped in tradition and yet unaware of it. Young American poets apparently are so newly awakened to American ideals and patterns of thought as to be prevented by them from thinking or feeling for themselves.

Kimball Flaccus is a mature poet technically. He is no undisciplined mouther of words like Paul Engle. He writes of

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a young man's experiences in a country college—of college friendships, tramps, skiing trips, of New England springs and falls. He believes in the granite strength of New England hills, in good old American individualism. He is excited when he remembers the Indian life which once moved over his college hills. He believes, in other words, in writing out of America, in rooting his art in his own country. But for all his subject matter, his art is literary, his language and his rhythms are literary. He has not, as yet, struck through to an imagery, syntax, or rhythm which is authentic and his own.

He is too self-consciously the trained *college* poet, gifted, expert, capable of fine lyrics and fine blank verse, but only now and then capable of an unmistakably original line. In a few of his New England character sketches he approaches originality. But in most of the poems about his own experiences he uses the conventional poetic phrase, the poetic-sounding line, misfit though it be. Here, for example, he is talking about his canoe:

> O balanced miracle of deft precision,
> O factory-born, mechanic-midwived bird,
> Earth craft projected through the tides of space
> To touch me here by the Connecticut
> With the impersonal shadow of your wing,
> In the hot womb of the mind one man conceived you;
> Though many hands welded the metal frame,
> One hand controls you now.

Now this is dull, and dull, I think, because it is bookish—the sort of poetry which comes when a young writer thinks, "This is a good subject for a poem," and then, remembering all he has been taught about the art of poetry, writes.

Kimball Flaccus is only twenty-one. He is a careful student of poetic technique. Now and then he gives us a fine line or passage. If he were not worthy of analysis, one would not bother to point out his faults. His book has dignity, a certain fineness of conception, very real promise. But at present his work exemplifies the danger a young man runs in setting out to be an "American poet."

EDA LOU WALTON

Gamaliel Bradford

The Letters of Gamaliel Bradford, 1918 to 1931. Edited by Van Wyck Brooks. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.50.

EACH of Gamaliel Bradford's many books is a monument to his personal courage. During all his nearly seventy years he was almost intolerably ill; very feeble in physique, he was prey to many ailments, the frequent victim of terrible vertigo. Sustained effort was impossible for him, yet he trained himself to a system of reading and writing that allowed him to absorb huge masses of literature and to produce, besides the voluminous "Journal" and the indefatigable correspondence, of which the present volume represents but a part, a solid shelf of biographical essays, or, as he called them, "psychographs."

Quite apart from what it represents of his courage, his work is not to be despised. If Bradford does not ring the bell as Strachey always does, then at least he does not, as Strachey so often does, ring the bell at the wrong house or only out of mischievousness. Unlike Strachey, he was honest and strictly accurate; if he never misrepresents his characters into a new vitality he at least never misrepresents them. Writing in part at a time when biography was a rage and a fad, he appealed to the more cultivated popular taste—not to the special tastes of the literati—and served to offset the brash presumptions of "fictionalized" and "interpretative" biography. His "psychographs" (he fought for the needless word) are useful as pleasant arrangements of the conventional view. Short, and therefore seldom in danger of being dull, they give competent summary and convenient information; but they never truly enlighten.

Whoever reads Bradford's personalia must see at once why his work could not transcend this highly competent and useful mediocrity. Among other things the success of the modern biographer depends upon his sensitivity to his own time and people, together with the ability to cast this understanding back into a past time. But Bradford, because of his invalidism, was a man out of touch with his own time trying passionately to get into contact. Nor was his the rich inner life which convention ascribes to the recluse. His inner life was busy but not rich: he lived by a constant borrowing. The "Journal" seems to show a man trying to support his soul by raising loans from the culture of all mankind and perhaps most frequently from the more stricken romantics of the nineteenth century. His private meditations remain Amiel, Leopardi, Senancour, and the letter-writers of an earlier France, all at several removes.

The present volume of letters shows him trying to get into touch with the life of America between 1918 and 1931. The letters are pathetically long, pathetically humble, often pathetically uncalled-for and pathetically confused. He knew that he was between two cultures and he tried desperately to come into contact with the new. Had he been physically more robust, socially more vigorous, he might have achieved the stubborn yet gracious dignity of George Edward Woodberry as he saw the passing of the dominance of the culture he loved. But as Bradford said of himself (his humility and self-depreciation are pitifully and perhaps unfairly disarming): "I was born senile and am only by slow approaches just beginning to taste afar off the very slightest flavor of youth." To be young and at one with his nation he seems to have given up all the prerogatives of his years and all the certainties of his training, yet he did not have the one thing that would have compensated him for their loss—a truly sharp and skeptical eye.

He wanted to be in tune with the New America. And so he learned to worship energy for its own sake and to believe that Theodore Roosevelt, because he made a big noise, was useful. "What most of all fascinates me about Lincoln is the infinite tolerance, the unlimited understanding. . . . All the same, the righteous fury, the *saeva indignatio,* of Roosevelt is what helps the world, and I am immensely grateful for it." He put aside the old creeds and became the communicant of a skeptical, amorphous religiosity whose standards allowed the vulgar revivalism of Moody as somehow desirable. Rejecting the aloofness which his advanced age gave him, speaking from the simplicity of his touching new "youth," he found the America of the *Smart Set,* of realism mixed with silk-stocking sex, "sophistication," and contempt, to be true and important. From a man so confused, so anxiously straining to be included, we cannot expect biography of superlative insight; it is to the credit of his real tradition and of his honesty that he has given us sound journeyman work.

LIONEL TRILLING

"Peace and Order" in China

Problems of the Pacific, 1933. Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Banff, 1933. University of Chicago Press. $5.

IT is a fine commentary on this record of an international Pacific conference that it contains not one reference to the Chinese Soviet Republic or the six wars which the Nanking Government has waged against it. Perhaps that is because the Nanking Government has been defeated in every one of its wars. However, there is indirect reference. We are told that the Nanking Government is "reclaiming" regions in Hupeh Province "devastated by the bandits and Communists." The fact is, of

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course, that these regions were devastated not by the masses who had established their Soviets there but by the Nanking militarists who overran them.

There are two papers in this volume by Chinese delegates which deserve special mention. One, by Gideon Chen, is entitled Chinese Government [Nanking] Economic Planning and Reconstruction; the other is The Agrarian Problem in China, by Professor Chen Han-seng. Gideon Chen's report seems to have been one of the chief propaganda bids for foreign capitalist loans and investments in China. It did not get very far, however, for a summary of the Banff proceedings announces that the first necessity in China is the "restoration of peace and order." The *leit-motif* of Gideon Chen's report is the Five-Year Plan of the Nanking Government. Since 1929, when Nanking lifted the idea of planning from the Soviet Government, it has periodically announced a Four-Year, a Five-Year, a Six-Year, and a Ten-Year Plan. All began with a long list of the names of generals and politicians who constituted the Planning Commission, and all ended with a plea to foreign capitalists for money. Nothing has come of any of them. As for the restoration of "peace and order," what it amounts to in Nanking territory today is seen in the report of the Chinese delegate Professor Chen Han-seng, the noted Chinese historian and agrarian research scholar. Professor Chen has done a masterly piece of work. In it we see the labyrinthine system of feudal landlordism which constitutes one of the main pillars of the Nanking Government. We see the landlord, who is also government official, tax collector, usurer, judge, jury, and executioner all in one. It is this gentleman who maintains "law and order" in Chinese villages.

Professor Chen Han-seng begins his report like this: "That the whole economic fabric of China is constructed on the back of the peasant is a fact probably known to many people." Then he shows by citing facts what the land problem is in China: In one of the richest districts of China, that of Ting Hsien in the north, "70 per cent of the peasant population own less than 30 per cent of the cultivated land," while in the Yangtze delta region the landlords "are purely and simply rent collectors. . . . There the monopoly of land ownership has gone so far that 3 per cent of the population possess 80 per cent of the land." Near Wusih, a city five hours by train from Shanghai, "less than 6 per cent of the landlord families possess 47 per cent of the cultivated land, and 69 per cent of the families, poor peasants and hired peasants, keep only 14.2 per cent of the land." In Kwantung Province to the extreme south, "2 per cent of the landlord families enjoy the ownership of more than half of the land," while in the eastern part of Kwangsi Province, "2 per cent of the families possess 71 per cent of the cultivated land, and 70 per cent of the peasant families are landless." Professor Chen's report reveals how the temple lands are being secretly mortgaged and sold by the powerful landlord monks, or publicly auctioned by local militarists. Throughout Manchuria, even before the Japanese occupation, the local militarists had turned public lands into their own great private estates. In Suiyuan Province, northwest of Peking, "265 Catholic churches claim a total of 5,000,000 mow of land [one mow is one-sixth of an acre]." Two powerful Chinese landlords, Lee and Yang, own 70,000 mow and have usurped 400,000 mow of state land.

It should interest the American people to know that Chinese militarists and politicians take advantage of disastrous floods and famines to build up great estates for themselves. Professor Chen mentions facts to prove this, showing that in the great 1931 Yangtze floods, for which Americans donated money and food, the politicians and rich landlords merely utilized the occasion to get control of the land of the peasants. In the northwestern famine region government officials gave starving peasant families one meal of rice and took in return 100 mow of land.

The role of rent and usury in the bankruptcy of Chinese agrarian economy is also brilliantly brought out. Professor Chen says: "Powerful absentee landlords sometimes do not pay taxes at all; their share of the tax burden falls upon the shoulders of poor peasants." The following paragraph gives a picture of the thing called "peace and order":

> Village administration in China is simply permeated by the omnipresent influence of the landlord. Tax, police, judicial, and educational systems are built upon his power. Poor peasants who fail to satisfy the landlord-official in tax and rent payments are brutally imprisoned and tortured. In Kiangsu Province [Shanghai-Nanking area] as many as 500 tenants are kept in one small district prison. In Wusih [between Shanghai and Nanking] are 518 village chiefs. One hundred and four of these have been investigated as regards their economic status: 91.3 per cent of them are landlords, 7.7 per cent are rich peasants, and 1 per cent small merchants. . . . In this respect, Wusih is typical of all the districts in China. . . . Because of the extremely small farms, poor peasants in China cannot secure the credit they need from the banks directly. Thus the big landlords in the villages, besides their political power, always command the trade and usury capital in the locality.

In concluding, Professor Chen tells us that the landless peasants in China are growing in number, and pouring into the army—there are at least 2,000,000 soldiers in the armies of the militarists—in order to get rice. There are, he further says, at least 60,000,000 unemployed in the country.

Professor Chen draws no conclusions from his researches. But the masses of Chinese peasants and workers in the central and southern part of the country have reached their own conclusion, namely, revolution. Yet we are told by the Institute of Pacific Relations that "peace and order" must be restored by the Nanking Government, preparatory to the granting of loans from foreign governments. There is something seriously wrong with the brains and hearts of any group of people who would desire that the peace and order of the Nanking Government be inflicted longer upon the Chinese people.

Professor Chen's paper has been published in pamphlet form by the Institute of Pacific Relations, 129 East Fifty-second Street, New York City. The cost is 25 cents, but the value is a thousand times that. It is the result of scientific labor extending over a period of many years. Wherever China is studied, this pamphlet is indispensable.

AGNES SMEDLEY

Looking at Pictures

Enjoying Pictures. By Clive Bell. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

CLIVE BELL'S latest book explains as a meditation. The first essay is concerned with an hour's happiness in the National Gallery. An examination of this happiness brings out the central theme of the rest of the book: the aesthete confronted by a work of art is first conscious of a moment of ecstasy ("the aesthetic thrill"). Following this intense flash of feeling is a period of more sober pleasure ("the aesthetic mood") which cannot be attained without the agency of the original engendering spark. While absorbed in the aesthetic mood the aesthete subjects the work of art to "enthusiastic analysis." Any element of the painting may offer itself as subject for analysis, even such elements as iconography, influence of other schools, a fold of drapery, some acute piece of observation on the part of the painter. The best point Mr. Bell makes in this connection is that works of art differ in the pleasure they give according to the quality and amount of material they offer for enthusiastic analysis. Certainly, it seems to me, when this standard is applied to most modern paintings it becomes appar-

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ent that they were painted almost entirely for the sake of the original flash of feeling.

The second essay, In the Vatican, is for the most part an enthusiastic analysis of Raphael's *stanze*. It is always pleasant to hear a good word for these lovely paintings, too often scorned in late years by those fashionables who can only bear to look at Giotto and Picasso. I found the parallel Mr. Bell draws between Milton and Raphael a good one. He says of a quotation from Milton:

> Now that is abstract in a way; certainly it is not direct but it is not rhetorical either. The primitive emotion has been carried to a far place and there converted to forms of splendor. But it is not rhetoric; the symbols are not ready-made, the epithets are vividly expressive. It is art in perfection. And so, I was to discover, are the *stanze* of Raffael.

I cannot feel, however, that there is much value in a book about painting that does not make the reader want to rush to the nearest picture. An "art book" should be a tonic for the visual nerve. Usually they tend merely to stimulate those who talk without looking to talk even more wonderfully. I am afraid Mr. Bell's book, except for twenty-eight of the illustrations and an occasional passage about a specific painting, is more about the man standing in front of the picture than the picture itself. Because of this there seems to be little point in criticism for or against; the whole issue is too personal and too remote. However, I cannot help questioning Mr. Bell's complete dismissal of narrative in painting, nor can I be sure that wit is a non-aesthetic element in art. I also balk at a certain grisly archness that creeps now and again into the writing. Mr. Bell, I think, would be wise to stick to his own serious and delicately pompous style.

I heartily agree with him when he states that just as some people will go unmusical to their grave, so others must always be blind to painting, and ignorant of the "aesthetic thrill." Here is Mr. Bell's message to the unfit: "There is nothing surprising or shocking or humiliating in not being able to appreciate pictures."

ROBERT MORSE

Shorter Notices

Sir Richard Steele. By Willard Connely. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.75.

The life of Sir Richard Steele was so stormy, so merry, so diversified, so perfect a small mirror of the eighteenth century, that it is surprising that contemporary writers have come very near to ignoring him. Much credit is due Willard Connely for having filled this vacancy in modern biography. Mr. Connely's study of Steele is lengthy, scholarly, unprejudiced, and well written. Much research has gone into this volume. Mr. Connely has studied, literally, every foot of ground that Steele's mortal body is known to have touched. Nor has any facet of his many-sided character been neglected. His improvidence, his wining and dining, his political enthusiasms, his love, his gossip, his wit, his sentiment, are all carefully presented to us. Any scholar or student may turn with confidence to Mr. Connely's book, and be assured that all the available facts about Steele are contained in its pages. Yet one must confess that for all its virtues this biography is not one that will delight a more disinterested, casual reader. The truth is that Mr. Connely has done too much research. The book is weighted down with detail, much of it really meaningless. The talent of Addison's collaborator was essentially a light and trivial one, often merely the talent of a gossip writer, and the dulness of his weighty political writings only confirms this. Mr. Connely has not properly perceived this point, and the airy Dick Steele has been smothered in a catalogue of facts better suited to an archaeological treatise. The father of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* deserved a kinder fate.

Women Must Work. By Richard Aldington. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Women must work—but so, too, must men. It is this fact, when so many of the other sex are desperately in need of jobs, that makes Mr. Aldington's book seem strangely dated. Mr. Aldington has written good novels in the past, but this one is more than an exception. In it he has chosen to deal with a problem in terms that are important today, but he has done so anachronistically and in a highly specialized sense. One wonders whether the very quality of being civilized and sympathetic has not prevented him from coming to grips with the realities he means to deal with. His heroine is an unconscionable prig, and her hardness seems to be less the result of circumstance than of vanity and spitefulness. It is as if Mr. Aldington had become encased in tolerance and the attitude of strict balance that a sophisticated and liberal writer usually believes it is necessary for him to maintain. Indignation would certainly be preferable to the displeasures, mixed with admiration, that this author feels for a character that he himself has created. And real sophistication should have enabled him to realize that the story of a girl who is dissatisfied at home and goes to seek employment in London, before war and its results had made such a desire for self-expression relatively unimportant, is an evasion. One cannot be interested in Etta; one can only wonder why Mr. Aldington should have expected people would be.

["Half Mile Down," by William Beebe, costs $5. It was incorrectly listed at $3.50 in *The Nation* of December 12.]

Drama

Holiday Suggestions

"Anything Goes." Alvin Theater. Victor Moore as Public Enemy No. 13 in a No. 1 musical revue, with Ethel Merman at her best.

"Dark Victory." Little Theater. Tallulah Bankhead being very attractive in a romantic tragedy.

"Gold Eagle Guy." Morosco Theater. How a ruthless superman built a shipping empire on the West Coast. Excellent production by the Group Theater of a forceful and picturesque drama, with a fine performance by J. Edward Bromberg. One of the best dramas of the season.

Eva Le Gallienne and the Civic Repertory Company. Broadhurst Theater. For two weeks beginning Christmas night Miss Le Gallienne is offering her colorful production of Rostand's "L'Aiglon."

"Life Begins at 8:40." Winter Garden. Disputes with "Anything Goes" for first place among the revues.

"Merrily We Roll Along." Music Box Theater. One of the outstanding hits and very good indeed if you don't mind having your serious plays use a little staycomb in their hair. By George Kaufman and Moss Hart, who excoriate cheap success without forgetting to put in a few wisecracks where they will do most good.

"Page Miss Glory." Mansfield Theater. Dorothy Hall in a rough and ready satire on beauty contests which isn't too particular how it gets its laughs, but gets them anyway.

"Personal Appearance." Henry Miller's Theater. Much like the above but about a movie star this time and perhaps a trifle less mechanical.

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"Post Road." Masque Theater. Novel and exciting crook melodrama which begins as a quiet domestic comedy but has lots of surprises up its sleeve.

"Revenge with Music." New Amsterdam Theater. Charles Winninger, Rex O'Malley, and Libby Holman in a lavish and generally entertaining operetta with lots of comedy and some good dancing in a more or less Spanish manner.

"Sailors of Cattaro." Civic Repertory Theater. The third and much the best offering by the Theater Union, which goes in for plays with a revolutionary purpose. This one is all about a mutiny on board an Austrian man-of-war, and it is first rate as a play, quite aside from the red-flag waving.

"Small Miracle." Forty-eighth Street Theater. Hard-boiled melodrama more or less in the "Grand Hotel" tradition but expertly done and lifted above its own level by the startling performance of Joseph Spurin-Calleia as a murderer who didn't exactly want to be one.

"The Children's Hour." Maxine Elliott's Theater. Tense but grim drama about a fiendishly perverse child, who is played with extraordinary force by Florence McGee. One of the most-discussed plays of the year.

"The Distaff Side." Booth Theater. A sizable hit by John Van Druten, but one which seemed unnecessarily tame to me. With Sybil Thorndike.

"The Farmer Takes a Wife." Forty-sixth Street Theater. Picturesque and remarkably engaging comedy by Frank Elser and Marc Connelly about the great days of the Erie Canal. Mr. Connelly has written in his best manner and there are delightful performances by June Walker and Herb Williams. To me one of the most enjoyable evenings of the season.

"Valley Forge." Guild Theater. Maxwell Anderson's entertaining drama about George Washington, with Philip Merivale as the Father of His Country. The whole thing seemed very pleasantly theatrical to me, but there are many who take it more seriously without liking it any the less.

"Within the Gates." National Theater. Sean O'Casey's poetic and symbolic morality play about the Dreamer, the Bishop, and the Young Whore in Hyde Park. According to many good critics it is the great modern play, but I found it a bit pretentious.

The following opened too late for review: Ina Claire in "Ode to Liberty" (Lyceum Theater), Katharine Cornell in "Romeo and Juliet" (Martin Beck Theater), Walter Hampden in Shakespearean repertory (Forty-fourth Street Theater), "Accent on Youth" by Samson Raphaelson (Plymouth Theater), "Rain from Heaven"—Jane Cowl in S. N. Behrman's new play (Golden Theater).

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Films

Chaliapin's Don Quixote

AT the Cameo this week is to be seen an English re-take of the French talking-picture version of "Don Quixote" concerning which so many advance reports have been received during the past two years. The film turns out to be disappointing in almost every respect. It reveals, among other things, the almost certain failure of commercial enterprises based on the assumption that a corraling of outstanding talents in several different fields necessarily insures artistic—or even commercial—success. G. W. Pabst is the director; Paul Morand has written the dialogue; and Chaliapin plays the title role. One should perhaps mention the English music-hall comedian George Robey, who plays Sancho Panza, and the Hollywood ingenue Sydney Fox, who plays Don Quixote's niece. The roster of celebrities

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is impressive, but the result of their collaboration is not. The burden of the failure, of course, must be laid to Pabst, whose task it was to subordinate these very different personalities to some single end or effect. But it may be said in his defense that the feat of curbing the irrepressible histrionism of the venerable Chaliapin was too much to expect of even the greatest of German film directors. No more perhaps can he be held responsible for the injection of the gross humors of the English music hall in the person of George Robey. These choices were probably not of his dictation; and Pabst, who left Germany for France in the hope of greater freedom for working out his ideas and theories, undoubtedly had to yield to the fact that the conscientious director in our present society can never quite escape the dictatorship of the box office.

According to report, Pabst was attracted to the present enterprise by the possibility of reinterpreting the Cervantes masterpiece as an allegory of social injustice. There are several evidences throughout the film of just such an intention. For the famous episode of the windmills Pabst actually supplies a motivation not to be found in Cervantes: Don Quixote, toward the end of his journey, comes upon a band of peasants carrying sacks of grain and hears from them a sad tale of taxes, exploitation by the millers, and the rest. It is immediately after this that the melancholy knight plunges his lance into the whirling windmill. But the social theme is not consistently developed. Like the more general theme of the impossibility of human justice, which was undoubtedly Cervantes's real theme, it is scattered and lost in the development of the action. It is subordinated in particular to the simple fact of Don Quixote's mental derangement, which Pabst, with a literalness that is possibly Teutonic, is so anxious to make clear to his audience that he devotes two of the longest episodes to its exposition. Taking no chances on his audience, Pabst makes the characters in the film itself register the necessary response to Don Quixote's folly. The result is that what is emphasized is this folly rather than the nobility underlying it—that nobility of folly which has caused Don Quixote's name to become an adjective in most of the languages of Western Europe. In Cervantes that nobility is conveyed through the uniformly sympathetic tone of the author's style whenever he is speaking of his hero. It is this sympathy which gives a justification to the poor knight's actions even when they are most absurd. No such uniformity of tone is established in Pabst's picture: we see Don Quixote from so many different points of view that in the end we see him from none at all. And it is this shifting of the point of view from Don Quixote himself to Sancho, from the devoted Sancho to the mocking populace, which is responsible for the disturbing jerkiness of tempo with which the story is unfolded. The picture remains in the memory only as a succession of uncoordinated images, most of them of the magnificent physical personality of Chaliapin, which once again manages to conquer everything within range.

"Babes in Toyland" is undoubtedly offered by Hollywood as a special treat for the children at this season of the year. But the warning should be issued that it is likely to leave on the more sensitive of them an indelible trauma. If they are not frightened out of their wits by the version of Bogyland (Hollywood macabre at its most terrifying), they will be instructed in the elements of sadism by the badly miscast Laurel and Hardy team.

WILLIAM TROY

Forthcoming Reviews

William Troy on John Strachey, Ernest Gruening on Carleton Beals, Oswald G. Villard on General Tasker Howard Bliss, Douglas Haskell on Catharine Bauer.

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